TELOS

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Special Issue on Populism II

Robert Bresler: The End of New Deal Liberalism
Paul Gottfried: Administration and Liberal Democracy
Thomas Fleming: Three Faces of Democracy
Frank Adler: From American Democracy To Statism
Clyde Wilson: In Search of American Populism
Leslie Wilson: African-American Populism
Kaveh Afrasiabi: Islamic Populism
Donald Warren: White Americans as a Minority
Joseph Bendersky: The Disappearance of Blonds
Luciano Pellicani: Methodological Individualism
Manfred Wiegandt: The "*Konservative Revolution*"

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A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Number 104 **Summer 1995**

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Articles

Introduction....3
Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

The End of New Deal Liberalism and the Rise of Populism....13
Robert J. Bresler

Public Administration and Liberal Democracy....27
Paul Gottfried

Three Faces of Democracy: Cleisthenes, Jefferson, and Robespierre...51
Thomas Fleming

The Original Model of American Democracy and the Turn to Statism...68
Frank Adler

Up at the Fork of the Creek: In Search of American Populism....77
Clyde Wilson

Lost Opportunity: African-American Populism....89
Leslie Wilson

Islamic Populism....97
Kaveh L. Afrasiabi

White Americans as a Minority....127
Donald I. Warren

The Disappearance of Blonds:
Immigration, Race and the Reemergence of "Thinking White"....135
Joseph W. Bendersky

Methodological Individualism....159
Luciano Pellicani

Reviews

The "*Konservative Revolution*" — Then and Now....175
Manfred H. Wiegandt

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Introduction

While budget stalemates and other seemingly sharp differences have shattered the previous consensus concerning the general direction of post-Cold War US domestic policy, current public debates have been limited largely to *quantitative* details: the size of the deficit, how soon to balance the budget, restrictions on the growth of entitlements, etc. Yet something fundamental has changed. Gone is the confidence in the government's ability to solve all problems by deploying adequate amounts of resources; gone also is that optimism according to which it was only a matter of time before "the American dream" would become a reality for all. The dismal record of most major government programs has raised the suspicion that the root of most of these problems may be structural and, therefore, inherent in the very nature of what American government became in mid-20th century. If the latter is indeed the case, and evidence to that effect seems to be accumulating rapidly, it may be necessary to ask more basic questions about how the present predicament came into being and how to reverse it. Postponed by the *de facto* state of emergency necessitated by Cold War imperatives, questions concerning the fiscal viability and desirability of modern welfare states are finally being asked.

Even if the liberal claim were true that it is ultimately all a matter of adequate government funding and of having the rich pay their "fair share" of taxes, the likely outcome would still be a series of rationality, motivational and economic crises. This state of affairs, however, does not legitimate Panglossian conservative conclusions to the effect that voters simply want government out of their lives. Future generations will probably wonder about the integrity and wisdom of this particular electorate which, trapped in the collectivist predicament of personal irresponsibility *vis à vis* the commonweal, is unwilling to consider even containing entitlements it cannot afford while insisting on not paying for them through commensurate taxation. As a result, it debates endlessly about the *magnitude* of the burden to pass on to its progeny in the form of a huge national debt. Whether diagnosed as standard political opportunism, ordinary

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cynicism or collective nihilism, one thing is clear: the kind of stable government *qua* rational administration of the *res publica* assumed for almost two centuries as the normal state of affairs seems to have given way to a crisis-ridden caricature. Now that the Cold War can no longer legitimate an unaccountable and out-of-control welfare/warfare state, it is time to begin prefiguring what went wrong, how to undo the mistakes and maybe excogitate concrete alternatives.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely the clock can be turned back to reinstate the *status quo ante*, and no clear alternatives are even on the table for consideration: both liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans seem to operate within the narrow parameters of the given, blissfully unaware not only of other possible options but of the antinomic character of the present institutional framework. Those traditionally entrusted with imagining possible futures and suggesting new solutions — the intellectuals — have abdicated their calling even more abysmally than politicians. Practically all major public debates today seem to rotate around either "inclusiveness" (the liberal snake-oil prescribed for all social ills by those who uncritically assume the existing system to be fundamentally sound), or "voluntary exclusion" (the desperate conservative option of those who have lost all confidence in government and wish to be left alone, unaware that even such limited secession can only be predicated on the institutionalization of substantial modifications to existing political arrangements).

Populism prefigures precisely such an alternative, but so far it has remained misunderstood and confused with all sorts of social aberrations. Consequently, it has received only minimal attention, and even then by relatively careless figures interested more in instrumentalizing growing populist sentiments than in either retrieving a useful past or projecting a different future. This second special issue of *Telos* continues the ongoing project of clarifying the history and nature of populism, both as a political movement and as a possible new institutional order. It also seeks, however, to understand the process of gradual involution which has led to the present predicament. Thus Robert Bresler traces the way the New Deal has ended up accepted by both major parties and, therefore, part and parcel of "the system." Largely because of this state of affairs, today both parties seem to have lost much of their legitimacy as representatives of popular aspirations. The resulting populist defection from their ranks is the result of this process of systematic delegitimation, but has yet to find any clear political expression — a predicament that makes it a valuable prey for both Democrats and Republican seeking to broaden their otherwise shrinking electoral base.

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In a similar vein, Paul Gottfried describes how liberal democracy has gradually deteriorated into a kind of "bureaucratic centralism" whose legitimacy no longer seems to have much to do with ideology or principles, but simply with the delivery of goods and services — a predicament not altogether different, even if much more benign, than its discredited Soviet counterpart. As in the case of the latter, which is resurfacing throughout the former Soviet Empire in the wake of the hardships brought about by a careless marketization and privatization, this depoliticization by a New Class of experts and managers remains caught in a fatal contradiction: its success is predicated precisely on the erosion of those unacknowledged social preconditions without which it cannot effectively reproduce itself as a viable system.[1]

The increasing professionalization of all features of everyday life — the only solution the New Class can provide for social pathologies and systemic disfunctions — extends "the dialectic of enlightenment" and intensifies rather than alleviates the problematic state of affairs it seeks to resolve. Contrary to Gottfried's pessimism concerning the possibility of putting an end to the indefinite perpetuation of such a process, a characteristic he shares with the first generation of Frankfurt School theorists, present policies can only be extended by increasingly precluding the possibility of their further reproducibility. Today the crisis of liberalism can no longer be posed dogmatically in terms of a choice between "socialism or barbarism" (especially since it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the two), thus leaving further centralization as the only meaningful alternative. Rather, if that liberalism Gottfried so strongly despises is to survive, it will have to remain limited to a federal level totalizing reconstituted autonomous communities whose practices it will no longer mandate. This is why it may be necessary to approach the future by rethinking the past, not as an inferior version of the present, but as paths not taken, possibilities not explored and a patrimony of traditions and wisdom partly forgotten but not beyond retrieval.

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1. It is the kind of predicament described by Habermas and his collegues a couple of decades ago as "the legitimation crisis" of advanced industrial society. Contrary to Habermas' liberal projections, however, such a crisis cannot be resolved merely by deploying more formal democracy or by rationalizing what he presents as a linguistified and thereby misconstrued lifeworld. Operating according to a logic prior to and beyond the reach of rational discourse, the real lifeworld is not susceptible to such manipulations. At issue is not any dogmatically deduced Weberian "legitimacy" — no societies have ever been more "legitimate" than contemporary Western ones — but real community self-determination and autonomy, unencumbered by otherwise equally ungrounded and ungroundable Enlightenment "oughts" seeking to legitimate sophisticated new modes of New Class domination.

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Most of the material in this issue — the remainder of the papers presented at the "Populism and the New Politics" conference (made possible by a generous grant from the Kaplan Fund) — proposes precisely such an approach. Musing on the fact that the conference was held in Cooper Union, the site of many fateful gatherings in the past, Thomas Fleming minced no word by posing the question in the sharpest possible terms: "In February of 1860 Abraham Lincoln came to Cooper Union in New York City to explain his vision of the American founding. Dismissing the charge that he and his Republican party were revolutionary, he [nevertheless] turned a constitutional system established by Washington, Adams, and Jefferson as a regime of liberty into a radical Jacobin state rooted in the principle of equality." Such a development, a final resolution of fundamental ambiguities in the US constitutional framework, paved the way for the kind of centralization and bureaucratization which over a century later, in the 1990s, seems to have become exhausted and counterproductive.

Fleming, however, may have been somewhat too optimistic: not only has liberty been compromised, the "principle of equality" he claims to have taken its place has turned out to be an ideological fig-leaf for the institutionalization and legitimation of unprecedented inequality. Not only has the gap between rich and poor widened considerably since the Civil War, the conditions which traditionally provided opportunities for social mobility in the past have all but disappeared for those whom the state claims to protect. Affirmative action, compulsory public education and preferential programs for the underprivileged have only succeeded in creating a relatively small ethnic-, race- and gender-conscious middle bureaucracy effectively shielding "the rich and famous" from the wrath of those condemned to bear the ultimate costs of the "new and improved" system of New Class domination. The traditional American ideal of small proprietorship, meaningful labor and responsible, autonomous individuality Christopher Lasch saw as the populist model has been discredited among "the underprivileged" in favor of the media glorification of, e.g., the handful of gifted athletes or amoral "super-flies" who make it by hook and crook, in a system where big city ghettoes are ravaged by drugs, most of its ablest young men are in jail, and the state-mandated social acceptance of sexual promiscuity and illegitimate births condemns future generations to an even worse fate.

While agreeing with the general thrust of this kind of analysis, some of the other conference participants were not altogether in agreement with the claim that the Statue of Liberty donated by the French to the US after

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the Civil War was really a Trojan Horse symbolizing the successful subversion of the original American system. According to Frank Adler: "There is no doubt the US has evolved into a statist system vastly different from its point of departure. Yet the proposition that the original American model was somehow replaced or subverted by its French counterpart seems historically false and theoretically misleading." Whether or not the "second founding" of American democracy can be blamed entirely on the French or on a "Jacobin" Lincoln, there is no doubt statism began to make major strides in the US after the Civil War and, as Bresler emphasizes, was refined and greatly strengthened by the New Deal and the Cold War. There is also no doubt, as Clyde Wilson observes, that "American populism has been an expression of hostility to state power and those who exercise or seek to exercise it" and that "most populists have looked to Thomas Jefferson, the great original American critic of consolidated power, as their patron saint." For populists, American democracy is what Jefferson taught rather than what Johnson practiced.

Fleming's flamboyant account also vindicates the centrality of religion in American society — a centrality readily recognized even by those Founding Fathers with theistic preferences. Accordingly, when Jefferson wrote to a group of Connecticut Baptists that there was a "wall of separation between church and state," it was meant as a guarantee of religious freedom, not, as now interpreted by "secular humanists," "as the power of government to set people free from religion." To the extent no world-view can exist without postulating fundamental assumptions legitimated only by the social reality it prefigures and helps to construct, the secular humanists' ghettoization of all religion to the strictly private domain cannot leave the broader public sphere as axiologically and theologically "neutral." Its secular character conceals idiosyncractic enthymemetic premises whose particularity is presented as universally valid and binding for all. The ultimate result is equivalent to the establishment of an unacknowledged religion as dogmatic as any in the past: New Class scientism and idolatry, whose theological poverty can never be satisfactorily compensated by the psychobabble of the new therapeutic priesthood.

The historical links between populism and religion is implicitly emphasized by Leslie Wilson's account of "Afro-American Populism," which he claims survived only thanks to the extraordinary resiliance of black churches. When populism began to be instrumentalized by an exclusionary progressive movement pervaded through and through by racism and statism, black populism rejected politics altogether and retreated into

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churches as the only sanctuary able to provide blacks with the kind of organic communities they desperately needed in a hostile environment. Although the government has generally succeeded in instrumentalizing Afro-American populists as the shock troops for its ideological agenda and, *nolens volens*, as the unwitting accomplices in the devastation of Afro-American communities, black churches remain the best sites for reconstituting a color-blind populism able to confront the otherwise insurmountable problems of big city ghettoes.

Although usually universal in character, religion always obtains in the particular living practices of local communities. It turns into an abstract ideology when it becomes identified *sic et nunc* with secular power. While providing that transcendental dimension without which no society can be established and sustained, religion can translate into a political order only at the cost of turning into a theocracy. The latter is fundamentally incompatible with any kind of populism vindicating the primacy of the community only in order to constitute and enrich autonomous individuality. While religion may be a powerful force in totalizing opposition to oppression, injustice or foreign domination, it is far from obvious that its political institutionalization is compatible with freedom, self-determination and local autonomy. Thus, while Kaveh Afrasiabi's extremely well-informed account of the trajectory of the Iranian revolution throws considerable light on its meaning and prospects, he does not make a very convincing case for its "populist" character.

Popular participation alone is not sufficient to qualify any movement as populist. The *sine qua non conditio* of populism is the living dialectic between individual and community, whereby the first internalizes the norms of the latter while subsequently enriching and reproducing them. The role of Islam in the Iranian revolution may contribute to an understanding of its fervor and energy, but it does not lead to the conclusion that the regime it brought to power has anything to do with populism. A case to that effect could have been made only on the basis of a careful analysis of local dynamics, which Afrasiabi does not deal with extensively and, in the few cases he does, as in the torching of Teheran's red-light district, the account looks more like religious fanaticism rather than populism.

Afrasiabi's analysis is further complicated by his insistence on deploying modernist categories of Western sociology to interpret "Islamic Populism." Thus: "While he [Foucault] did not consider the revolution populist, much of what he wrote documents the development of an Iranian populism." For Afrasiabi, however, all populism seems to mean is

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popular participation in the events and commitment to the revolution's general objectives, which end up mystified rather than clarified by embroiling them in Foucault's otherwise confused and self-serving account of power relations.

The same can be said of Afrasiabi's attempt to see the Iranian events through Habermas' communicative rationality. Flesh-and-blood tends to turn into pure "discourse" and "language," while the ultimate objective, the vindication of traditional modes of being, first evaporates into communicative practices and, when that gaseous account dissipates because of its own vacuity, the whole revolution ends up demonized as "fascism" or "barbarism." But Afrasiabi's painstaking reconstruction of the Iranian revolution and of its various questionable interpretations is much richer in detail than the sociologistic straighjacket into which he stubbornly forces it. Along with all traditional societies not yet completely ravaged by modernity, Iran also remains irreducibly decentralized and, when all the dust eventually settles, potentially open to populist outcomes at odds with the alleged international imperialist aims of official Islam Afrasiabi describes.

Populism often thrives on resentment, and all resentment is not necessarily irrational or always unwarranted. It only becomes problematic if and when it can find no satisfaction and degenerates into a frozen conspiratorial ideology. Unfortunately, that is precisely what seems to be happening as one of the unintended consequences of recent US race policies. As Donald Warren indicates, a growing number of whites today feel disenfranchised and marginalized. Thus, instead of contributing to the dissipation of racial tensions, government measures to that effect have resulted in a counterproductive predicament with no solution in sight: if the preferential policies are rescinded the tageted minorities will feel slighted; if they are not, the white majority will become increasingly alienated from what it perceives as a permanently handicapped group of people within their midst. Unless populism succeeds in developing and implementing a rigorous federal agenda focused on communal practices rather than government policies, this growing resentment may lead to some of the worst features populism has occasionally displayed during times of decline, desperation and frustration.

One manifestation of this resentment has taken the form of distrust of all differences and the call for, e.g., stringent restrictions on immigration. These sentiments in the US have a problematic history and, as Joseph Bendersky shows, in the past have tended to feed into the worst forms of racism — a phenomenon by no means limited to marginal and uneducated sectors of the population but widespread as well in the academy

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and in the highest levels of government. Yet Bendersky's reconstruction of the racist theories entertained at various times in the US and interwined with the worst nativist and no-nothing movements tends to overshoot the mark. He leaves the impression that *all* current opposition to immigration is a function of lingering racism, thus implicitly dismissing the scores of compelling arguments seeking to curtail illegal immigration and rationalize the flow of legal immigrants.

In the cases Bendersky describes, racism and fear of difference clearly seem to have been motivating factors in American immigration policy. But preference to European rather than Asian or African immigrants is not necessarily racist. There is a cultural dimension to the social composition of the US, and the desire to maintain a Western society with a Judeo-Christian profile is neither irrational nor xenophobic. If there is not a common cultural horizon, if it is all open to the world and it becomes impossible to distinguish between inside and outside, then the US as a distinct cultural and political entity will sooner or later cease to exist. There have to be shared traditions, customs, values, etc.

On a more practical level, immigration has always been connected with labor requirements, political objectives and, last but not least, the ability of the community to absorb and integrate new immigrants. While the concept of a community based on "blondness" or "whiteness" is certainly alien to the ideals if not the practice of the America republic, privileging the needs of citizens over others is neither discriminatory, irrational nor unjust. Does it make sense to import large numbers of unskilled immigrants when there is high unemployment, wage levels are falling and community social services are overburdened? And if there are particular ethnic groups who are unassimilable or unwilling to assimilate to American society, does it make sense to have them join communities already on the verge of disfunctionality? Along with the racist theories Bendersky reconstructs, these are not really the parameters within which the issue of immigration has to be formulated. To do so may well conceal hidden political agendas, such as the wish to depress wages, to swell a docile constituency for statist policies, or to alter dramatically the predominant culture.

These issues are by no means paradigmatically American. They are even more hotly debated in countries such as Germany and France. Unaccustomed to the influx of substantial numbers of immigrants, these countries seem to be traumatized by the consequences of the end of the Cold War, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia and various other world crises which have resulted in massive demographic dislocations. In Germany in

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particular, one result seems to have been the resurgence of neo-Nazi or other extreme Right-wing movements. Given Germany's past, this state of affairs tends to be particularly bothersome for German liberals, who are not convinced Nazism is a closed chapter in German history. Not only do they end up demonizing the Right as a whole, they also tend to see any critique of liberalism as Nazism *in nuce*.

Thus Manfred Wiegandt goes out of his way to demonstrate that Armin Mohler's and Stefan Breuer's disassociation of the *Konservative Revolution* from National Socialism is arbitrary and unwarranted. Worried by renewed interest in the works of consevative thinkers of the interwar period, he warns readers of the dangers of becoming lured by ideas which have had catastrophic consequences. But "too much knowledge" does not usually result in uninformed proselytization. Wiegand emphasizes one of Breuer's conclusions to the effect that, notwithstanding their heterogeneous views, these authors were all nationalists and rejected liberalism — also typical features of National Socialism. This is enough for Wiegandt to dismiss the whole group on the ground that their ideas allegedly led to Nazism in the 1920s and 1930s, and may lead once again, first to nationalism and then to Nazism, if "rendered acceptable" today.

Why not allow the readers to decide the merits of these ideas? Are they too stupid to see the possible connections? Were Germans in the interwar years "duped" into Nazism because liberal thinkers did not warn them of the dangers of nationalism and of critiques of liberalism? This is all too naive, censorial and dogmatic. Any German with a third grade education could have figured out what was up by reading *Mein Kampf*, and most of them did. If they did become Nazis it certainly was not because they read too many authors belonging to the "*Konservative Revolution*." German students today should read carefully not only these authors, but also outright Nazi apologists such as Alfred Bäumler, Alfred Rosemberg, *et. al.* in order really to understand what Nazism was. Then they may inquire into the possible complicity of liberalism, especially Woodrow Wilson's brand, and the impact of Versailles, or Wilson's policies resulting in a catastrophic peace treaty (for Germany) — all contributing factors to the widespread popularity of nationalism during the interwar period.

The implicit identification of *all* criticism of liberalism with the Right is not only wrong but checkmates the possibility of inquiring into alternatives able to solve many of the problems liberalism seems incapable of handling. A critique of liberalism could lead to a re-examination of the foundations of society, of cultural identity and politics in general. Today,

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liberalism is in serious trouble and discussions of its foundations are most urgently needed. The best way to prevent any resurgence of nationalism and Nazism is to understand exactly what they were, criticize them and thus inoculate future generations from repeating the mistakes of the past. Unless this is done, future generations will find themselves in the same predicament as most of the members of today's European Left, whose doctrinaire official ideology — anti-fascism — has no concrete content beyond a few moralistic interdictions concerning an unmitigated but otherwise unknown evil. Despite all the talk about *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany, the past has yet to be confronted, understood and accounted for. This can be done only by studying rather than censoring the past. Then it will become obvious to all that the critique of liberalism is not crypto-fascism.

CULTURAL DYNAMICS

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The End of New Deal Liberalism and the Rise of Populism

Robert J. Bresler

The political legacy of the New Deal and the impact of the Cold War kept alive the rationale for a powerful central state. From the late 1930s until the mid-1960s, the American public, according to opinion polls, had confidence in the federal government and in such institutions as universities, corporations, churches and the military. Liberalism was ascendent. It was associated with strong presidents, victory in WWII, the early foreign policy successes of the Cold War (the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Blockade, NATO, the democratization of West Germany and Japan), prosperity, new opportunities for workers and minorities and a dramatic increase in the nation's wealth. The New Dealers considered themselves the rightful heirs of 19th century populism with their appeal to the working man and the rural poor. New Deal liberalism sounded major themes and spawned proposals designed to appeal to a broad base of working and middle class Americans — Social Security, the AFL-CIO, the G.I. Bill of Rights, regional economic development (Tennessee Valley Authority and the Rural Electrification Administration). Although it attracted intellectuals, New Deal liberalism was deeply rooted in grass roots American politics. The loyalties it gained, it kept for generations.

The first Republican president of this era, Dwight D. Eisenhower, understood the central political reality of his time — that far from fearing government, Americans had developed an appetite for it. Eisenhower's victory over Sen. Robert A. Taft (R-Ohio), an anti-New Dealer and opponent of Truman's internationalist foreign policy, placed the Republican Party solidly in the center of American politics. True to this understanding, the Eisenhower Administration developed a consolidationist approach to

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the welfare state that made the New Deal a permanent part of the political landscape, off limits to any serious conservative attack. [1]

During the Eisenhower years the Cold War was the main rationale for the expansion of the state into new areas of domestic life. Supporters of the modest Civil Rights Laws of 1957 and 1960 claimed such legislation could enhance US influence in post-colonial Africa. Fanciful as it may seem today, the Eisenhower Administration made the argument that the Interstate Highway Act of 1956 would facilitate evacuation from the cities in the event of a Soviet nuclear attack. The National Defense Education Act of 1958, which funded new graduate programs, was a direct response to the Soviet Union's successful launch of the Sputnik satellite and to the perception that the US was losing its technological edge.

These programs and their accommodation to the expansion of the state were at the heart of what Eisenhower called "Modern Republicanism." An expanding economy, a reduced post-Korean War defense budget, and the relative modesty of these domestic programs allowed Eisenhower to balance the budget and maintain the Republican tradition of fiscal conservatism. Nonetheless, this was a smorgasbord of liberalism and conservatism without sharp edges or clear definition: "Modern Republicanism was not so much a philosophy as a balancing act."[2] Any serious criticism of the growth of the state was relegated to the political fringes. In fact, such a critique had no major constituency. A broad consensus enveloped American politics — the liberals accepted the realities of corporate power and the conservatives adjusted to the welfare state. Eisenhower's consensus politics served his presidency well, but it did little for the Republican Party. It diluted its traditional critique of statism and clouded its vision. Modern Republicanism excited few and had no significant constituency. After the Republicans won Congress in the 1952 Eisenhower landslide, control reverted to the Democrats in 1954, where it stayed for decades. The 1950s consensus placed limits on liberalism as well. A conservative coalition of Southern Democrats and Republicans controlling Congress since 1938 blocked both Harry Truman's Fair Deal and John Kennedy's New Frontier. Despite their different labels, these programs were essen-

1. In 1954, President Eisenhower wrote his brother Edgar, who had been critical of his domestic policies, "Should any political party attempt to abolish Social Security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws and farm programs, you would not hear again of that party in our political history." See Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower the President* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), pp.218-220.

2. E. J. Dionne Jr., *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), p.175.

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tially expansions of the New Deal — federal aid to education, public housing, medical insurance and civil rights.

The slow growth of the Republican Party in the South during that decade did provide some political base for a new generation of conservatives. With Richard Nixon placing himself out of contention and Nelson Rockefeller embarrassed by his marital complication, Barry Goldwater, the new hero of Republican conservatives, was able to capture the 1964 presidential nomination. Modern Republicans found Goldwater's views outside the consensus and his nomination unacceptable. The Party was torn asunder, and the 1964 election was a rout.

The landslide victory of Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater in 1964 provided the massive Democratic majorities in Congress, exceeding those of any election since 1936. Congress, now dominated by northern liberal Democrats, overcame the conservative coalition. With Johnson's prodding, it enacted programs far more ambitious than anything Truman or Kennedy had proposed. Ironically, it was in this moment of triumph that the Democratic Party began a transformation that was to remove it from its populist roots.

In his zeal to take advantage of these congressional majorities, Johnson designed programs for which there had been no grass roots demand. The Great Society was the product of an emerging new class of policy intellectuals recruited from the social sciences, law and social work. Poverty, they assumed, was a result of behavioral pathologies — teenage pregnancy, school drop-outs, no work ethic, high crime, political apathy — that could be ameliorated by the right mix of interventionist strategies and government programs. For example, the Jobs Corps would provide remedial programs to make troubled teenagers employable; the Manpower Development Program would retrain unemployed workers; Head Start would provide preschool education for poor children; Legal Services would give the poor access to the courts for class-action suits; the Community Action Program would allow the federal government to contract with community groups to administer local antipoverty programs.

Each program generated a bureaucratic enclave of highly educated, increasingly well-paid experts. Designed to serve a special constituency of governmental clients, this managerial elite had little impact on the lives of most working and middle class Americans. Even those programs of the Truman and Kennedy eras affected only special constituencies — Medicare covered the elderly already protected by Social Security; the aid to education program targeted school districts with low-income children and later became a tool for desegregating schools in the South.

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Instead of reinforcing working and middle class support, these programs alienated those who had been the backbone of liberal majorities. The Community Action Program created elective anti-poverty boards and regional offices staffed by political opponents of local Democratic politicians. Model Cities, another Great Society initiative, was, according to Michael Barone, "a social scientist's dream and a mayor's nightmare, in which the resources of all government aid were supposed to be poured into a single favored neighborhood."[3] If you were neither elderly, poor, nor black, the Great Society was merely something to pay for or read about.

Johnson's conduct in Vietnam divided his constituency even deeper. Reluctant to withdraw or to escalate the conflict, he and his theater commander, Gen. William Westmoreland, conducted a war of attrition eventually requiring over 500,000 troops against the determined Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. With college and graduate deferments available to the sons of the middle and upper-middle class, the war was fought primarily by high school graduates and dropouts. Gov. George Wallace's attacks on civil rights laws, liberal Supreme Court decisions, unpatriotic anti-war liberals, and "pointy-headed bureaucrats" (in his presidential campaigns of 1964, 1968 and 1972) attracted support from white working class voters both in the North and the South. His appeal was more cultural than economic in a period of substantial growth and prosperity. The Wallace movement was a clear warning that the Democrats were losing a grip on their traditional political base — the white working class.

Disillusioned by the Vietnam War and uninspired by the Great Society, public faith in government began to falter. Such faith was essential to the success of the Democratic Party. In the presidential elections that followed Johnson's 1964 triumph, liberal Democrats (Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, Walter Mondale, and Michael Dukakis) could not sustain sufficient working class support as many supported George Wallace, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan and even George Bush. Despite these presidential defeats, Democrats continued to control Congress and drive the domestic agenda long after most Americans had lost faith in governmental solutions. In one of the great ironies of recent American politics, government grew almost in indirect proportion to the public's faith in it. As James Q. Wilson put it, "An era, beginning with the New Deal and the Second World War, in which voters saw a government they admired take on tasks it knew how to perform give way to one in which the citizens

3. Michael Barone, *Our Country: The Shaping of America from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), p. 408.

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watched a government they distrusted take on goals it did not know how to achieve and perform tasks that set one citizen against another."[4]

The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 did little to stop this trend. His overheated conservative rhetoric was designed to fan populist anger against student activists and black militants, and to soothe the Goldwater and Wallace voters. Nonetheless, he governed in the Eisenhower tradition. If Modern Republicanism was a balancing act, the Nixon experience demonstrated how far the scales had tipped. Confronted with a Democratic Congress driven by an environmental and consumer agenda, Nixon presided over an elephantine growth of the entitlement and regulatory state. Regulatory legislation passed during his administration reached hitherto untouched aspects of American life. Nixon signed into law the Poison Prevention Packaging Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Consumer Product Safety Act, the Noise Pollution and Control Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act. The pages in the Federal Register, where regulations are published, tripled during his administration.[5] His own Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, Herbert Stein, has said: "Probably more new regulation was imposed on the economy during the Nixon Administration than in any other presidency since the New Deal."[6]

Nixon had neither the ideological interest nor the political desire to oppose the torrent of environmental activity unleashed by Earth Day in April 1970 — teach-ins, marches, and vigils. His 1970 State of the Union address was a virtual charter of environmentalism. "Clean air, clean water, open spaces," Nixon declared, "these should once again be the birthright of every American." This address included a recommendation for $10 billion to clean the nation's water supplies. The next year he proclaimed the first Earth Week and introduced thirty-six environmental proposals. Most became law — the National Environmental Policy Act, which established the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Clean Air Act, the Oil Spill Act, the Noise Control Act, the Clean Water Act, the Ocean Dumping Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act and other anti-pollution regulations of pesticides and chemicals. A new dimension of the regulatory state was born.[7]

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4. James Q. Wilson, "Reinventing Public Administration," *PS: Political Science and Politics* (December, 1994), p. 669.

5. Jonathan Rauch, "What Nixon Wrought," in the *New Republic* (May 16, 1994), p. 31.

6. Herbert Stein, *Presidential Economics: The Making of Economic Policy from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1988), p. 190.

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Nixon's environmentalism was tempered by his Republicanism, i.e., his "Modern Republicanism." According to John Whitaker, his Assistant Director of the Domestic Council, Nixon had no intention of trying "to out-clean" Sen. Ed Muskie (D-Me.), a potential 1972 Democratic presidential nominee.[8] In a private meeting with Henry Ford II and Lee Iacocca concerning auto emission control, Nixon portrayed himself as a bridge between corporate leadership and the environmental activists, and as an opponent of the movement's radicalism. "What they are interested in is destroying the system. . . I am for the system." On numerous environmental issues, Nixon attempted to introduce some notion of costs and benefits to the regulatory policy. It was to no avail. As Stein lamented: "The juggernaut of environmental regulation proved not to be controllable by the Nixon Administration."[9]

Nixon had no intention of rolling back the Great Society. John Ehrlichman, Nixon's top domestic policy advisor, wrote to Chief of Staff Bob Haldeman in 1970, "In terms of social program, e.g., manpower training, anti-poverty, environment, health and education, we are doing as much or more than Johnson or Kennedy." Ehrlichman was not exaggerating. In 1972, Nixon signed a bill granting a 20% increase in Social Security benefits and set the stage for the future indexing of benefits. During the eight years of the Nixon-Ford Administrations, entitlement and discretionary domestic spending rose from 9.7% of the GNP to 15.4%.

Concerned that rising unemployment and inflation could endanger his re-election prospects in 1972, Nixon unveiled on August 15, 1971 a New Economic Policy reminiscent of the war-time economic policies of Roosevelt and Truman. It was the brain-child of Treasury Secretary John Connally, former Democratic Governor of Texas and protegé of Lyndon Johnson. Connally convinced Nixon that he needed to make a grand gesture in economic policy in the tradition of Roosevelt and Johnson. Nixon announced a 90-day freeze on wages and prices to be administered by a pay board, a price board and a cost of living council, and the suspension of the convertibility of foreign held dollars into gold, allowing the dollar "to float" on international markets. Effective in the short run, the controls produced low inflation and unemployment in 1972, and no doubt assisted Nixon's landslide victory over George McGovern. Over time, however,

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7. Joan Hoff, *Nixon Reconsidered* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 22; Jonathan Aitken, *Nixon: A Life* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 1993), pp. 397-98.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
9. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

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they proved to be a tar baby. The Nixon Administration was afraid to abandon them, fearing it would unleash another round of inflation. They continued in one form or another until April 1974. Even so, they had only a moderate effect on inflation, which rose at an average annual rate of 6.6%. As the Watergate scandals revealed, Nixon had shed whatever inhibitions he may have harbored about the use of government power.

Jimmy Carter approached the presidency as a chastened liberal without an overarching agenda and the dramatic label that went with it. In the 1976 Democratic primaries, he presented himself as something of a populist focusing on the problems of unemployment and inflation and minimizing the more divisive social issues. He sounded what later became known as neo-liberal themes — the reorganization of government, the reduction of bureaucracy, reform of the tax code, and balancing the budget. At first his approach showed promise. In the Florida primary, he attracted enough white working class and black voters to defeat Wallace; and in the Pennsylvania primary, he defeated labor's candidate Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) and liberal favorite Rep. Morris Udall (D-Ariz.). Carter soon learned the limits of how far neo-liberalism could carry him within the base of the Democratic Party. In order to secure the nomination, he promised the National Education Association a new Department of Education; the United Auto Workers, a government sponsored health care plan; and the Democratic mayors n urban economic development initiative, and public works jobs to provide them fiscal relief.[10] He was able to keep his black/white populist constituency together in defeating Gerald Ford that November. Carter carried the vast majority of Southern Wallace voters and carried all the Southern states except Virginia and Florida.

Once in office, Carter could not reconcile his neo-liberalism with the demands of the liberal Democrats. The welfare reform proposals that came to his desk from Heath, Education, and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano and Labor Secretary Ray Marshall involved more federal spending for jobs or cash assistance; the recommendation of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Patricia Harris[11] for a national urban policy called for adding another $8-12 billion to the $50 billion of

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10. Stuart E. Eizenstat, "President Carter, the Democratic Party, and the Making of Domestic Policy," in *The Presidency and Domestic Policies of Jimmy Carter*, ed. by Herbert D. Rosenbaum and Alexej Ugrinsky (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 7.

11. Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1993), pp. 52-54, 74-75.

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government aid to cities. In both cases, Carter rejected the proposals. He could develop neither a welfare policy nor an urban policy that pleased the core Democratic constituency.

When faced with double digit inflation in 1979-80, Carter reverted to budgetary austerity, which further eroded his support in the Party. His fiscal year 1979 budget called for virtually no increase in discretionary domestic spending. Other problems — the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the spike in oil prices, the Tehran hostage crisis, and rise in interest rates — made Carter's position untenable in 1980. These calamitous events compounded his more fundamental political failure. He could not satisfy either middle and working class Americans, who were increasingly disenchanted with government, or the poor and minorities, who were convinced discretionary spending was essential to their needs. This was a dilemma no Democratic president could easily resolve. Carter's inability to connect with the populist base he had tapped in 1976 was symptomatic of the changing public perception of American liberalism. Post-New Deal liberalism was linked in the public mind with military defeat in Vietnam, double-digit inflation, campus unrest, oil shocks, racial quotas and ineffective presidents. Ted Kennedy's unsuccessful challenge to Carter in the 1980 Democratic primary was additional evidence of how difficult it was to stoke up the old fires.

Elected to the presidency with substantial working class votes, Ronald Reagan was the first president of the post-WWII era to challenge domestic liberalism and sense its weakness. He realized that working class and middle income Americans no longer equated their economic interests with the growth of the state. In fact, much of their anger was directed at the state and its elites. Reagan's promise of lower taxes, reduced spending and fewer regulations struck a responsive chord. But the results of his administration were mixed. His success in lowering marginal income tax rates was offset by substantial increases in the Social Security tax. Consequently, marginal income tax rates on median income actually rose between 1981-1984.[12] Reagan made no effort, after a half-hearted attempt in 1981, to reduce the growth of the entitlement state or discretionary domestic spending. The only programs he succeeded in eliminating were Revenue Sharing and the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA). The latter was replaced by the Jobs Partnership Training Act.

In order to regain the foreign policy initiative and roll back Soviet influence, Reagan demanded a substantial increase in the defense budget, an expansion of CIA activities in Afghanistan, Angola and Nicaragua,

12. David Frum, *Dead Right* (New Republic Books, 1994), p. 37.

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and the development of a Strategic Defense Initiative to challenge deterrence logic. The Iran-Contra affair demonstrated how determined he was to maintain control of foreign policy in the White House and keep it away from Congressional scrutiny. Although he was far more conservative and populist than his centrist Republican predecessors (and successor), he was ideologically attached to an activist government in foreign policy and politically unable to oppose it in domestic policy.

In effect, the Cold War muted the populist impulse as much as it clouded conservative government. White middle class anger — directed against internationalist elites in the McCarthy era, civil rights militants and student activists in the 1960s and 1970s, and the media elite in the 1980s and 1990s — served Republican interests in presidential elections. The policies of Nixon and Reagan did little to build a electoral base with these voters at the congressional, state or local level. Their solace was largely rhetorical. Nixon helped institutionalize affirmative action with set-asides and other race conscious policies; Reagan gave little active support to the pro-life movement, allowed affirmative action policies to stand, and rarely mentioned school prayer.

The Congressional base of the Republican Party remained in the business community. The parade of bankers, lawyers, and chamber of commerce presidents sent to Congress had little impact on the Democratic agenda beyond constituent needs. Most settled comfortably into a minority posture, especially in the House, and made no concerted effort to challenge the Democratic majority. For a brief period in the early Reagan years, these new Republicans built an effective coalition with the Boll Weevil Democrats to lower the marginal tax rates. In general, they played the politics of pork and constituent service with little hope of ever becoming a majority. As a recent study of House Republicans suggests, many members placed near-term individual interests over Party issues — trading votes with Democrats, winning pork-barrel projects advancing pet causes.[13] They rarely faced serious opposition at home. Hence, white working class support for Nixon and Reagan never penetrated far below the presidential level. The Republican Party had neither the program nor the grass roots organization to take advantage of it.

The Republican Party in the Cold War years faced the worst of both worlds — an elitist funding base (Wall Street and business PACs) and a

13. William F. Connelly, Jr. and John J. Pitney, *Congress' Permanent Minority: Republicans in the House* (Lanham, MA: Littlefield and Adams, 1994), p. 4.

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narrow constituent base (small town/rural America and the affluent suburbs). The election of Eisenhower was not a broad mandate, rather a repudiation of Truman's failed Korean policy and a tribute to a popular folk hero. Nixon's election was a reaction to Democratic failure in Vietnam. Neither victory hastened a political realignment beyond the presidential level. Reagan's victory went somewhat deeper than Eisenhower's or Nixon's, and demonstrated the potential for the Right to capture the white lower and middle-income vote. Their support for the Republican Party waned with the end of the 1980s boom and Reagan's retirement. George Bush, with his preppie manner and upper-class background combined with his themeless domestic program, had little to communicate to Reagan Democrats. A surprise to no one, they deserted him for Perot and Clinton in 1992.

The failure of the Republican Party to become a voice for populism was brought about by four ineluctable factors: 1) the imperatives of the Cold War — a strong central state, high taxes and internationalist/interventionist foreign policy; 2) a docile congressional minority satisfied with the politics of pork and constituent service; 3) defensive presidents unable to prevent the growth of interest group liberalism; and 4) a political base dependent on business money and suburban volunteers. The themes of modern populism — local control, traditional morality, disdain of elites, isolationism — could not be woven into the policies and politics of Cold War Republicanism. In fact, Republicans only played a variation on the theme of Cold War Liberalism. The immutable fact of Soviet/American rivalry created a climate conducive to elitist government and centralized power.

Despite its failures, the Republican Party at least demonstrated the potential for building a new populist base. By contrast, the Democratic Party seemed at an intellectual dead end. Could the anxieties of many Americans be satisfied by the continued growth of the welfare state? Ironically, it was the young leaders of the New Left who saw in the early 1960s that the growing alienation of ordinary people from government would burgeon as a theme in the second half of the 20th century. In the Port Huron Statement, written in 1962, they declared: "the individual [should] share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life and society, [should] be organized to encourage independence in men and provide media for their common participation." As the New Left drifted into counterculture politics, romanticized violence, and vulgar Marxism, it lost an opportunity to reinvigorate liberalism and connect it with working class populism. More importantly, the later tone and

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direction of what might be called the postmodern Left had not even the vaguest resemblance to populism. Battles over women's rights, the environment, abortion, the defense budget, and gay rights were removed from much of what was happening in the lives of ordinary folks — the loss of manufacturing jobs, the deterioration of family life, and the destruction of neighborhoods by drugs and crime.

The same could be said of the liberal legislative victories of the 1960s and 1970s that created a new interest group liberalism. It was a mélange of environment, consumer, and affirmative action programs that spawned new bureaucracies — the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, Occupation Safety and Health Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department — that many working class Americans associated with top down elitism. Affirmative action programs, in contrast to the pro-union New Deal legislation, made white males the target rather than the beneficiary. Environmentalists often placed the protection of wilderness and endangered species over that of working people. Environmental groups such as the National Resources Defense Fund, the Sierra Club, and the National Audubon Society experienced a vast increase in membership. The image of these public interest lobbyists as a group of abstemious Ralph Naders living modestly in Washington and battling for the people was often far from the truth. For example, in 1991, the president of the National Wildlife Federation administered a budget of $77 million and drew $300,000 in compensation.[14] Despite their public interest rhetoric, many of these groups seemed to fit the special interest mold, asking for resources to be diverted to their cause over others — AIDS spending over defense; environmental restriction over highway spending.

On many issues, liberals were fearful of populist anger and sought relief in the courts. It was there and not at the ballot box that liberals won some of their most important battles over abortion, prayers in school, racial gerrymandering, defendants rights, censorship of pornography, and affirmative action. Their failure to fight for these causes in the political arena only weakened public support and reinforced their growing elitist image. In the 1970s and 1980s, they also succeed in penetrating institutions far removed from the daily lives of working and middle class America — the established foundations, the national media, etc. The universities witnessed an explosion of a Left-driven agenda — multi-culturalism, ethnic studies, women's studies,

14. Jonathan Rauch, *Demosclerosis*: *The Silent Killer of American Government* (New York: Times Books, 1994), p. 45.

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gay studies, post-modernism, diversity requirements. This only dramatized the gap between Left-liberals and Middle America, whose students desperately needed skills demanded by the market-place. Many colleges and universities, dominated by a tenured faculty whose mind-set was shaped by the 1960s, had little appreciation of the uncertainties of the market place and thus supported a curriculum driven by university politics rather than student needs. By the 1990s, higher education was facing a serious crisis of public confidence — underscored by a steady decline in state funding. No one should be surprised that many parents (particularly working fathers) were reluctant to go deep into debt in order to expose their children to an increasingly politicized curriculum in which their wars, their history, and their political status were subject to a sustained attack.

The media, the bane of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman, dominated by such conservative publishers as Henry Luce, Col. Robert McCormick, David Lawrence, and William Randolph Hearst, transformed itself dramatically. National news publications, previously moderate to conservative — *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News and World Report*, *The New York Times* — became outlets for political and cultural liberalism. The growth of talk radio in the 1990s and the phenomena of Rush Limbaugh is nothing more than the invention of a national conservative outlet. Ironically, the liberal slant of the media did not have the desired effect of shaping the American mind. It served only to anger Middle America, which saw millionaire celebrity journalists as part of a new elite. Concentrated in New York, L.A., Washington, D.C. and in universities and colleges across America (Cambridge, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, Madison, Chapel Hill) these elites were far removed from the lives of Middle America. It was a vantage point not for looking at, but rather looking down on America. Asked in a *Times-Mirror* survey in early 1994, what institution was the most important, 43% cited the media and 22% cited Washington. The more people felt bombarded with messages from the media trashing organized religion, the two-parent family (where, as Charles Krauthammer notes, "The real deviants of society stand unmasked, Who are they? Not Bonnie and Clyde, but Ozzie and Harriet."),[15] etc., the more the anger of middle and working class Americans grew.

As liberalism removed itself from Middle American concerns, its economic conditions deteriorated. Corporate downsizing, stagnant wages, two-earner families, weak unions, and periodic bouts of recession and

15. Charles Krauthammer, "Defining Deviancy Up," in *New Republic* (November 22, 1993), p. 21.

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inflation pinched their lives. Evangelical Christianity grew as a political force. It articulated the revolt against moral upheaval, repugnance of the dominant culture, fear of family deterioration, and the sense of social isolation. If nothing else, evangelical Christianity represents a desire for some certainty and security in a world where the ground is shifting under the feet of so many. As demonstrated in the recent election, its leaders are politically savvy and well-organized at the grass roots. It is difficult to imagine a new populist movement of any substance without them.

White populist anger was also manifest in numerous referenda votes in the West and Midwest — for term limits, against gay rights and immigration. The 1994 election was an earthquake that will transform the political landscape. Will it result in a political realignment such as what occurred in 1860, 1896, and 1932, establishing a new governing majority and a new political culture; or does it augur a political dealignment, leaving the political system in disarray and barely governable? In the 1994 election, the Congressional Republican Party became the vehicle and the beneficiary of this anger — white males voted 62% Republican, a gain of 11% over the 1992 congressional election; white born-again Christians voted 76% Republican, a gain of 10%; high school graduates voted 52% Republican, a gain of 11% over 1992; whites in the South voted 65% Republican, a gain of 12% over 1992. Democrats, in turn, showed strength among blacks, Jews, gays, liberals, unmarried women (which is where the real gender gap shows up), and people with post-graduate education.

This is a coalition unlikely to be attracted to the country club, corporate Republicans of the past. It is clustered around economic and cultural issues — welfare, abortion, affirmative action, the death penalty, prayer in schools, drugs, gun control. Whereas the populism of the late 19th century placed its faith in government action, the populism of the late 20th century has only disdain for government and little faith in its ability to solve problems.[16] During the Cold War, a combination of patriotism and anti-communism persuaded many working people that a strong central state was inevitable. It was needed not only to provide for the common defense but to build highways, educate students, and maintain a degree of ideological control. The end of the Cold War, thought by many to be the unhinging of conservatism, may be its liberation. Its attachment to the national security state made it difficult for conservatives to launch a massive

16. In 1954 only 16% of Americans believed that big government was our greatest problem. Recent polls show that number to be between 70-75%. Cited in Michael Vlahos, "The New Wave," in *National Review* (September 26, 1994), p. 44.

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attack on bureaucratic centralism. Although it is difficult to imagine conservatives not being in favor of a strong military in defense of vital national interests, their definition of what constitutes those interests and what threatens them has undergone a major transformation. During the Cold War, many conservatives found their anti-communism more powerful than their isolationism.

Conservative nationalists who opposed Wilsonian internationalism until Pearl Harbor found those instincts reawakened by the muddled neo-Wilsonianism of the Clinton Administration. The opposition to GATT and NAFTA, clearly populist in nature, was stirred not just by economic insecurity but by fear of supra-national bureaucracies these agreements have produced. Can the Republicans develop a coherent foreign policy, based on neo-realist principles that avoid the romanticism of isolationism and Wilsonianism? Will a globalized economy lead to more interventionism or less? If the answer is no, will isolationism reemerge as economic nationalism with all its potential for populist appeal?

Populist anger will be even more white-hot if its political beneficiaries betray it. Should the new Republican Congress produce another construct of timid centrism and interest-group conservatism of more business subsidies and tax breaks, the next political storm will be even more ferocious. A populist revolt that substitutes one elite for another without effecting any significant change in the lives of people could become the seed-bed of a new authoritarianism. The most disturbing question is whether the social upheaval that so disturbs many Americans — rising crime, family deterioration, job insecurity — can be altered by any set of social policies. Will limited, more decentralized government result in more job security, stronger families, less crime, reduced drug usage? The globalization of the economy, the information revolution, and the alteration of sexual and social mores cannot be wished or legislated away. Should the Republicans fail, it is unlikely the Democrats will benefit, given their stream of failures. More likely a new political movement could emerge from the ashes and who knows what rough beast will come slouching toward Jerusalem?

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Public Administration and Liberal Democracy

Paul Gottfried

I

The association of public administration with liberal democracy is by now taken for granted. At the end of the 20th century, this relation seems natural and unavoidable. Allegedly, justice and freedom can only operate in tandem through a liberal democratic welfare state. Almost all Western governments now fit that description. For astute observers, their shared features outweigh their cultural and institutional distinctions. Professional administrators oversee the details of popular government, look after social services, regulate commerce and provide for suitable transfers of income. Democracy has become synonymous with economic policy, usually signifying the distribution of entitlements or allowances, services, at least some public management of national resources, key industries, and corporate wealth.

Of course, there are degrees in the way different countries have pursued these activities, but only in degree, not in kind. Whether a particular democratic welfare state adds utilities to its public sector or controls them indirectly by determining wage-levels, hiring practices and permitted profits, is a contingent decision. The government's control remains awesomely powerful in either case. This came about in a mass democratic age, when entire populations began to demand an "equitable" distribution of wealth and access to consumer goods. The creation of this state mechanism (what the French call *le dispositif social*) was a response to popular demand: enlarged electorates produced mandates for a changed regime. It also drew legitimacy from a "liberal" creed that government exists to promote individual gratification.

Until recently, there was no necessary connection between a publicly administered unitary state and liberal democratic ideology. Before the French Revolution, public administration was a tool of monarchical sovereignty.

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Kings raised commoners (*novi homines*) to look after the public realm, to devise means for augmenting their revenues and to mete out uniform justice throughout their territories. Monarchs in Austria, Spain, Prussia, and France set up schools of cameral science and public law, where future government lawyers and administrators studied.[1] As Tocqueville noted in mid-19th century, a highly centralized national administration did not first originate in France with the Revolution. It was the legacy bequeathed to Jacobin France by the monarchy the revolutionaries overthrew.[2] In the 19th century, public administration continued to develop in all major European states, no matter what their political predilection. From Tsarist Russia to liberal monarchical England and republican France, public servants grew in importance and visibility.

Hegel assigned an exalted role to public administration. It represented universality and carried out the daily work of a modern nation state without the taint of social or material particularity.[3] In April, 1831 the government of the newly established July Monarchy in France recommended the integration of members of the public class into an expanded franchise. In addition to professors and military officers, and musicians and lawyers resident in their electoral districts for at least 5 years, the electorate was to be opened to judges and their staffs. Guizot and those with whom he formulated the original recommendation also hoped to extend the vote to local administrators managing populations of at least 30,000 and to the chief officials in federal and municipal districts (*départements* and *arrondissements*). Significantly, it was the republican Left in the French assembly which defeated this specific proposal for extending the franchise. Looking at state officials as the instrument of political reaction, intransigent democrats voted for limiting the vote to upper middle-class property holders and to members of the liberal professions.[4]

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1. On the connection between the new monarchies and the *novi homines*, see Wallace Ferguson, "Toward the Modern State," in *The Renaissance* (Harper & Row, New York; 1953), pp. 1-27; Arnaud d'Herbomez "Le Fonctionarisme en France à la Fin du Moyen Âge," in *Revue des Questions Historiques*, Vol. LXXXV (1903); and Gianfranco Miglio's informative essay on the early modern foundations of the bureaucratic nation state, "Genesi e Trasformazioni del Termine-Concetto 'Stato'," in *Le Regolarità della Politica*, Vol. II (Milan: Giuffré Editore, 1988), pp. 799-832.

2. Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, tr. by Stuart Gilbert (Garden City: Doubleday, 1955), particularly pp. 32-87.

3. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, tr. by T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 197f.

4. Pierre Rosanvallon, *Le Moment Guizot*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 124-31. For the reasons for the opposition from the democratic Left to the enfranchisement of French public officials in 1831, see Odilon Barrot's *Mémoires*, Vol. I (Paris: Plon,1875), pp. 252-57.

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In the present century the growing demand for social services and income redistribution did not by itself bring about the new political order. Before becoming the only respectable political model, it faced several competitors. In the interwar period, it had to deal with two rival models of public management and material redistribution, both of which had considerable followings. James Burnham has emphasized this rivalry and pointed to the common features of Soviet Communism, National Socialism, and welfare state democracy.[5] A new class of state administrators had gained political power in all of them by deftly manipulating popular rhetoric and redistributionist slogans. What further united these managerial experiments was their distinctiveness from capitalism and socialism, as each was understood in the early 20th century. The new managerial state was built on neither a market economy nor on true social equality. Rather, it elevated a managerial class which already had positioned itself in a corporate economy and would now provide state-authorized social services.

Fascists and communists seemed able to furnish those services while holding out the promise of regeneration for their societies. There is a vast literature on the rise and spread of the communist movement. At the end of WWII, the communist parties of Italy and France were the largest political organizations in those countries and commanded millions of votes. Less well-known is the widespread popularity enjoyed by fascism throughout the 1920s and 1930s.[6] Despite the assassination of the socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti in June 1924, Mussolini remained popular among social reformers into the 1930s. *The New Republic* and other publications supportive of social planning admired his economic policies and style of leadership. Within Italy itself, Mussolini was generally perceived as a modernizer as well as a Latin nationalist. His regime was hailed for restoring Italian political greatness and re-launching economic growth.

The appeal of this path to groups such as revisionist Zionists and the back-to-Africa followers of Marcus Garvey became less pronounced in the mid-1930s. Mussolini had overreached in trying to create an empire and Latin fascism became overshadowed by its more disagreeable German variant. WWII, the German defeat and the revelations of barbarity

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5. James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972); and Samuel T. Francis, *Power and History: The Political Thought of James Burnham* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984).

6. See John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1972) and John Lukacs, *The Last European War: September 1939/December 1941* (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976).

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discredited the fascist model. The collapse of the Soviet Union and its East European satellites in 1989 discredited the socialist model, though by then its appeal in the Western world had shrunk considerably. The liberal democratic welfare state model won over fascism and communism partly by default. After contributing to their downfall, it picked up support from those who either defected or were converted from the two failed models. It also exhibited certain strengths its rivals never had. In dealing with internal opposition, liberal democracies have generally desisted from physical brutality. They have also tolerated opposition while managing society. For the most part, liberal demo-cracies have been economically prosperous, encouraging the coexistence of markets and private initiative with a public sector and a regulated economy.

From WWII through the 1970s, most Western countries saw the steady expansion of both GNP and the social welfare net. In 1945, France introduced social security (up to then there had been only one national social program: accident insurance for workers — a program established in 1898). By the 1960s, the French national administration collected and dispensed funds for a multitude of allowances (*prestations*) and social insurance programs, without having to lower the standard of living. Despite increased government taxation, the French per capita Gross Domestic Product doubled between 1960 and 1982. By the early 1980s, the average Frenchman earned almost $10,000 yearly after taxes, placing him well ahead of his English and Italian and only slightly behind his German counterpart. This growth took place in a country in which subsidies to the agricultural sector remain almost as large as revenues collected from the income tax.[7]

In Germany, there was even greater prosperity after WWII. The postwar *Wirtschaftswunder* not only reindustrialized Germany but left it with the highest GNP after the US. This took place together with the establishment of enlarged welfare states at provincial and federal levels. Today, German wage-earners pay at least half their income back to the government.[8]

7. See Arnold J. Heidenheimer, ed., *Comparative Public Policy*, 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin's Press,1983), pp. 176-81. On the difficulty of funding continental welfare states *à coups de déplafonnements*, by steadily raising the ceiling on payments for social programs, see A. Joubert, "L'Assiette des Cotisations Sociales," in *Droit Social* (June 1993); and the special issue on "La Crise du Financement du Régime Général," in *Espace Social Européen* 9 (April 1993); and Pierre Rosanvallon, *La Crise de l'État-providence* (Paris: Seuil, 1981).

8. Karl Hardach, *Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1980), and Eric Owen Smith, *Third Party Involvement in Industrial Disputes: A Comparative Study of West Germany and Britain* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1989).

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In the US, the GNP and standard of living both rose in the postwar years. From the 1960s into the 1990s, the American GNP continued to rise despite the steadily greater share of earnings taken by the government. Between 1991 and 1995, US tax collection soared by one-third.

In England, the postwar democratic welfare state may be harder to justify. It has survived notwithstanding the economic crises that have dogged it since the late 1940s. Between 1913 and 1938, the English GNP doubled, and at the end of WWII England remained the most prosperous (or economically the least damaged) of the European industrial powers. According to the 1944 "Beveridge Report on Social Life," it seemed possible to move decisively toward English social democracy.[9] The postwar Labour government of Clement Atlee did exactly that, creating a national health service, pouring increasingly larger amount of funds into public education, nationalizing mines, utilities, transportation, steel and other major industries. Though the distribution of consumer goods rose in the late 1940s, by the early 1950s English voters, bothered by the very modest rise in living standards, brought the Conservatives back into power. But the returned opposition left most of Labour's programs untouched. In the 1960s, Harold MacMillan competed with Labour in promising expanded social services. Both major parties were then committed to a large national welfare state. In the 1970s Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson responded to militant demands and threats of strikes by union leaders by announcing a new "social contract." Thereafter the government would negotiate with those working in nationalized industries instead of trying to intimidate them. This conciliatory approach did nothing to improve obsolescent national enterprises or to stem the loss of jobs. By 1979, when the Thatcher government came to power, English unemployment stood at 1.5 million, the highest since the Great Depression. Real wages in England had been falling for almost a decade, and the economy had contracted in two of the previous four years.[10]

Despite these disasters, Harry Schwartz' observation about English

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9. Richard Rose, *Politics in England*, 3rd edition, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 198), pp. 8-19; and W. J. Mommsen, ed., *The Emergence of the Welfare State in Britain and Germany* (London: Croom-Helm, 1981), pp. 343-83, and Hugh Heclo, *Modern Social Politics In Britain and Sweden* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 141-47, pp. 254-72.

10. On the personal and political ties between Macmillan and Wilson, see Leslie Smith's biography *Harold Wilson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), especially pp. 75-76, and Kenneth O. Morgan, *The People's Peace: British History, 1945-1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 358-433.

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health services also applies to other aspects of the English welfare state. To most of those living under this form of government, it has been hugely successful.[11] It is seen to protect them against utter dearth and, despite the reprivatization of major industries undertaken in the 1980s, the public sector remains the largest English employer. A working- and middle-class concern is that the influx of Third World immigration from the Commonwealth will erode the financial base of the English welfare state. This concern is becoming widespread and, according to polls taken from the late 1970s, has grown into a burning issue for most people.

The trend toward public control, with only intermittent setbacks, has continued throughout the Western world for more than half a century. It has blurred any sharp and permanent distinction between public and private enterprise. The proportion of the work force made up of public employees is already approaching 50% in France, Germany, Holland, Norway, and Denmark, and is well over 60% in Sweden (where over 85% of earned income goes for taxes).[12] The US seems to have a smaller public sector than European industrial democracies. Government employment (excluding military personnel) accounts for about 15% of the national labor force. Even if the military is included, government-autho-rized jobs remain less than 30% of full-time employment.[13] To obtain an accurate picture of the American public sector, however, other factors should be considered. Government budgets grew from 26% to over 40% of the American GNP from the mid-1950s into the early 1990s. Moreover, in the 20th century the American government has expanded 6 times as much as economic growth.[14] While a progressively smaller percentage of earnings has been left to jobholders in the form of disposable income, the public sector has continued to grow — most strikingly since the 1960s. Equally important, its control is far greater than the number of jobs it directly creates.

The distribution of public funds and the awarding of licenses and contracts have allowed the American government to supervise what it has not explicitly authorized. One study tracing the extent of this "hidden" growth

11. Harry Schwartz, "Health Care in America: A Heretical Diagnosis," in *Saturday Review* (August, 14, 1971), pp. 14-17.

12. Richard Rose and Rei Shiratori, eds., *The Welfare State East and West*, (New York: Oxford University Press,1986), particularly 3-37; and Phyllis Moen, *Working Parents: Transformation in Gender Roles and Public Politics in Sweden* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 21-23.

13. US Council of Economic Advisors, *Annual Report*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993-1995), tables on pp. 232-33.

14. Robert Higgs, *Crisis and Leviathan: Critical Episodes in the Growth of Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 20-27.

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of the public sector demonstrates that it has been sufficiently dramatic to invalidate the often made contrast between American free enterprise and European statism.[15] Controlled economic activity need not take the form of public sector employment. Nor does government spending in the US have to conform to budgetary guidelines, as found in the *Annual Report*. Though the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 and the resulting Congressional Budget Office were designed to set overall targets for revenues and expenditures, the US Congress has evaded the intended restraints. Congressmen have resorted to off-budget outlays, as in the funding of synthetic fuel research and the 1995 bailout of the Mexican currency. Neither major party has resisted this circumvention of budgetary limits.

It may be premature for American conservatives to celebrate "the death of socialism" or to echo one celebrant, who in July 1995 proclaimed that "the Gingrich revolution is a rollback of both the 1960s and 1930s."[16] With all due respect to American postwar debates, no American or European political party seems likely to roll back the welfare state. It may dispute anticipated tax increases to cover entitlements or allowances, and it may even muddy discussion by equating the "American welfare state" with aid to dependent children. One may even make it appear that socialism is vanishing, because direct government ownership of the means of production has lost its mantra appeal among self-declared socialists, i.e., because the criterion for socialism provided by Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and others at the end of the last century (nationalization of industry) is no longer a popular idea, even among social reformers.[17]

What has taken its place in liberal democracies is a more enduring form of collectivism: the perceived growth of public administration as an instrument of equity. This has gone forward as liberal democratic states intrude on economic and social activities without, at least in the US, nationalizing anything outright. The terms "socialism" and "capitalism" no longer describe the process at work, which is one of administrative engulfment. In a probing response to conservative predictions about the end of socialism, John B. Judis notes the obvious fact that government

15. James T. Bennett and Thomas di Lorenzo, *Underground Government: The Off-Budget Public Sector* (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1983), and James T. Bennett and Thomas di Lorenzo, "How the Government Evades Taxes," in *Policy Review* (Winter 1982), pp. 71-89.

16. *The American Enterprise* (July/August 1995), p. 35.

17. Cf. Robert Higgs, *The Transformation of the American Economy 1865-1914* (New York: Wiley and Sons,1971); and by the same author "Eighteen Problematic Propositions on the Analysis of the Growth of Government," *Review of Austrian Economics*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1991), pp. 3-40.

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control of the economy has not gone away. He looks forward to an international regulation of capital, under an enlightened global administration, which protects "international labor rights." But this development will occur without the burdens of past socialist models: "It is unlikely anyone will describe this new international as 'socialist.' And I certainly don't think that future intellectuals will describe themselves as 'Marxists' in the same worshipful way as past generations."[18]

II

An indisputable strength of liberal democracy is its power to incorporate both liberal and democratic elements in defining its character. Yet this absorption of political forms has been selective and determined by what is compatible in each element with modern public administration. From democracy, liberal democrats have taken their insistence on general elections to be carried out with minimal voting restrictions and they have stressed the characteristically democratic values of political and social equality. Like 19th century liberals, they have turned to party organizations to stage elections and to arrange for a "rotation of governments" behind which administration can do its daily work. Liberal democrats also appeal to an expanded notion of freedom once called "the self-directing power of personality."[19] Basic to this thinking is the belief in a progression from a selfish, antisocial view of freedom to a fuller, more compassionate one. This progression is thought possible because of the formation of a science of society, and because of public administrators trained in the "experimental scientific method" in preparation for managing their fellow-citizens.

In the early 20th century, Anglo-American social planners fleshed out this vision of a liberal democratic future. In 1935, Dewey described the new "scientific" liberalism. Unlike 19th century liberals, who "lacked historic sense and interest" and were "frozen" in free-market doctrine, the new liberals view society as being "in continuous growth." This growth poses no mystery for these new liberals who, unlike earlier ones, are not "blinded by their own special interpretations of liberty, individuality and intelligence."[20] Dewey's liberals, who are not "historically conditioned," can grasp and control the constant features of a world otherwise in flux. The reason for this is their acquisition of a scientific method which, together

18. *The American Enterprise* (July/August 1995), p. 41.
19. L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1071), p. 25.
20. John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 32.

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with technology, has been the "active force in producing the revolutionary changes society is undergoing." Through social science, "the engineering mind in the invention and projection of far-reaching social plans" can furnish liberal democracy with a "concrete program of action." This, Dewey argued, is particularly urgent at the present time. Faced by authoritarian ideologies which feature their own forms of social control, liberal democrats must learn to profit fully from "scientific method and experimental intelligence." They must respond to any "narrowing of choice" between fascists and communists with their own call for "discipline, order, and organization." Indeed "regimentation of material and mechanical forces is the only way by which the mass of individuals can be released from the regimentation and consequent suppression of their cultural possibilities."[21]

Aside from the defense of a "scientifically" regimented economy, Dewey made a sustained plea for government as a vehicle of public education. Unlike old liberals, who held "a conception of individuality as something ready-made, already possessed, needing only the removal of certain legal restrictions," the new liberalism demands extensive socialization. It seeks to prepare individuals for the "conflict between institutions and habits originating in the pre-scientific and pre-technological age and the new forces generated by science and technology." Such training, in a properly administered society, will open "cultural possibilities" based on "cooperative and experimental science."[22]

Education was the keystone of social planning for Dewey and Deweyite social reformers, and for several generations their ideas ruled American schools of education, starting with the one where Dewey taught, at Columbia University. Moreover, the call to restructure public education around scientific and democratic values goes back to the dawn of liberal collectivist thinking. Like Dewey's "renascent liberalism," in 1911 L. T. Hobhouse's "constructive liberalism" prescribed that the state be an "overparent": "It is on the basis of the rights of the child, of his protection against parental neglect, of the equality of opportunity which he may claim as a future citizen and of his training to fill his place as a grown-up person in the social system" that the state should assume the right to education.[23]

By the 1920s and 1930s, this role of "overparent" would entail far more in the minds of democratic social planners. In the interwar years, Scandinavian reformers treated public education as a means of national

21. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
23. *Liberalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25 and 66.

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socialization.[24] According to Gunnar and Alva Myrdal, by monopolizing educational activities, the Swedish state could mold entire families in accordance with scientific collectivist methods. Until after WWII, that ethos was not always identifiably leftist. In the 1930s it included glorification of the "*Folknemmet* ([national home]," a Sterilization Act for racially and genetically defective individuals, and the acceptance of other forms of eugenic engineering. A longtime justification for Swedish social planning was the need to increase the natality of the Nordic peoples in a changing economic environment.[25] What provided the common link in all phases of Swedish social democracy, however, was the combination of public administration with a vision of social reconstruction. Educational reform as well as economic control was essential for whatever social changes were envisaged by Swedish social democrats.

Liberal democratic education has become increasingly different from its older liberal predecessor. It has acquired two defining functions: shaping social personality and helping to fill social space. When Prussian reformers introduced the *Volksschule* during the Napoleonic Wars, and when in the 1830s liberal ministers reformed and expanded French primary and secondary education, the justifications were both practical and non-egalitarian. The members of a modern nation, it was said, had to be literate in order to be employable. Besides, national unity allegedly required some type of shared learning. The French Minister of Education at the time, Guizot, took pains to distinguish between his national plan and a democratic one whereby public schools would be used to level down society.[26] Liberal democratic education, by contrast, sought explicitly to change social structure and social attitudes. A conspicuous case in point is postwar West Germany, where since 1945 "remolding the civic culture" has been a duty of both public educators and and public administrators.[27]

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24. See Allan Carlson, *The Swedish Experiment in Family Politics: The Myrdals and the Interwar Population Crisis* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers,1989); Roland Huntford, *The New Totalitarians* (New York: Stein & Day,1980), particularly 62-64; and Nicolaj-Klaus von Kreitor, "The Conservative Revolution in Sweden," in *Telos* 98-99 (Winter 1993/Spring 1994), pp. 249-54.

25. Something similar was at work in the US, as is reflected in immigration policies developed at the time and in the kind of discussions of these issues by administrators and policy-makers. See "The Disappearance of Blonds: Immigration, Race and the Reemergence of 'Thinking White'," in this issue of *Telos*.

26. *Le Moment Guizot*, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-46; and L. Trénard, "L'Enseignement sous la Monarchie de Juillet," in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaire*, Vol. XII (1965).

27. David P. Conradt, "West Germany: A Remade Political Culture," in *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 1974), pp. 222-38.

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Resocialization in Germany has aimed at inculcating democracy and encouraging Germans to "overcome their past [*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*]." The horrors of the Nazi era are regularly invoked to explain this national effort at creating a democratic culture. At the end of the WWII, *Time* featured expert testimony by prominent social scientists on what measures should be taken to transform the "German character." Basic to these suggestions was the need to reconstruct the German family. German males were seen as "passive-aggressive" bearers of the "authoritarian personality," prone to follow undemocratic leaders.[28] They presumably developed these personalities because of defective relations to their wives and children; and the German household was presented as a spawning ground for social pathology contributing to dictatorship and strife.

This therapeutic zeal, common to journalists, academics, and politicians, may be traced to the passions of war, especially one fought against the representatives of a murderous ideology. But this discussion was not limited to plans for an occupied Germany. What it proposed was no different from what American liberal democratic theorists would be doing at home. These reformers advocated the diffusion of "critical thinking" about traditional belief systems, and by the 1970s they introduced measures to produce gender equality in the home and the workplace. These proposals were equated with progress and science, and the failure of others to accept them became proof positive that public experts were needed to make liberal democracy work.

In the first half of the century, liberals presented their cultural and educational agendas as practical responses to socioeconomic pressures.[29] Dewey called for the social use of intelligence to forestall an impending "crisis in democracy," which he then attributed to the failure to apply "scientific procedures" to American political life. Though he advocated the resocialization of his fellow Americans, he claimed to be guided only by science in his pursuit of the common good. He contrasted "the state of intelligence in politics to the physical control of nature," and looked forward to the "outstanding demonstration of the meaning of organized intelligence" already achieved by technology.[30] The crisis Dewey addressed

28. *Time* (May 7, 1945); "A Problem in Global Penology" in *Saturday Review* (July 28, 1945), pp. 7-12; H. Eulau, "Germans have no Rights," in *The New Republic* (July 16, 1945), pp. 62-62. J. Katz, "Germany can be Reeducated," in *American Scholar*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (July 1945). pp. 381-82.

29. Dwight D. Murphey, *Liberalism in Contemporary America* (McLean, Virginia: Council for Social and Economic Studies, 1992), pp. 131-32.

30. *Liberalism and Social Action*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

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was moral and social, and his responses, according to one of his biographers, expressed his own moral judgments. By the 1950s, some of Dewey's values, particularly his commitment to self-government, had lost out to his own scientific and technical procedures. His disciples, S. M. Lipset, Robert Dahl, and Arthur Bestor, abandoned the ideal of genuine popular government and came to identify democracy with electoral laws and an expertly run welfare state. Calling themselves "realists," they also "conflated description and prescription."[31]

Dewey's friend, Herbert Croly also illustrates the practice of hiding personal preferences behind "historical necessities" and appeals to science. In the end, he too reduced democracy to a set of procedural and administrative problems. In 1909, Croly maintained that the Jeffersonian model of local democracy was no longer appropriate for the new industrial age. One could not depend on outdated social habits in preparing Americans to compete in a "world economy." In 1918, he came back to the same theme in constructing a brief for long-range national economic planning.[32] This future Wilsonian, soon to be editor of *The New Republic*, was as much concerned about social education as he was about America's economic place in the world. He complained about American provincialism and spoke of the need to adapt German social planning to a unified American people. Though Wilsonian liberals supported the Allied side in 1914, Croly continued to be well-disposed toward German state socialists and admired Hegel's attempt to integrate the sphere of individual liberty into the ethical will of a unified state. He fretted little that the "march of constructive national democracy" would be over the body of democratic localism. Indeed, he wished to accelerate that march by having the federal government socialize the American people. He insisted their political problems could be traced to an "erroneous democratic theory" — one that sacrificed collective education to individual interest. In the new democracy, "the nation must offer to the individual a formative and inspiring opportunity for public service." All learning must be made into a

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31. Robert B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 545: "All too often a description of the way politics works in the United States provided realists with their normative conception of what democracy should be."

32. Herbert Croly, *Progressive Democracy* (New York: Macmillan, 1914). On the profound effect of Croly's work on the American Progressive Party and its political leaders, see J. T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory*, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-16. Herbert's father, David, was a leading American exponent of Comtean positivism and sought to raise his son on this brand of social planning with faith in historical progress. See David W. Levy, *Herbert Croly of the New Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

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"national educational experience," and those who shape the new state must realize that "democracy cannot be disentangled from an aspiration toward human perfectibility and the adoption of measures looking in the direction of realizing such an aspiration."[33]

Croly's collaborator, Walter Weyl, was more explicit about the "progressively diffused education" which would nurture a modern industrial society. In 1912, he emphasized that economic changes and social grievances require centralized planning, but such planning could only succeed if accompanied by a "socialization of education." A sober democracy demands that citizens be willing to control their appetites and national consumption.[34] Instead of "capitalist anarchy of production and anarchy of consumption," the new democratic leadership had to prepare citizens to think entirely of the collective good: "The future education of the masses cannot be the traditional Procrustean, unrelated, and undifferentiated education of yesterday. It must be an education which will aid society, the conservation of the life and health of the citizens in their progressive development."[35]

This socialization of education proposed by Dewey, Croly, and Weyl was both attitudinal and vocational. It called for training citizens to be economically useful but also to look upon resources and consumer goods as a public benefit. Though Croly, Weyl, and *The New Republic* emphasized experimental science in schools, this analytic tool seemed to them more important for public administrators than for the masses of citizens. The "individual" for whom these thinkers planned was expected to accept their judgments after receiving the proper social education. Croly believed "a democratic nation must not accept human nature as it is but must move in the direction of improvement." Without a regime seeking this improvement, unenlightened individuals would harm themselves and others. This was the temptation faced by those who embraced the "false tradition" of an unplanned economy: "The popular enjoyment of a practically unrestricted economic opportunities is a condition which makes for individual bondage."[36]

By the 1930s and 1940s, the program of socialization American progressive reformers had outlined became more heavily cultural. Horace Kallen, one of Dewey's close associates and a founder of the New School for Social Research, presented this turning toward social control as positive

33. Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), p. 454.
34. Walter Weyl, *The New Democracy* (New York: Macmillan, 1912), pp. 327-28.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 329.
36. *The Promise of American Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 409 and 413.

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freedom. Though he popularized the term "cultural pluralism," his "approach to liberty" left only limited room for social or cultural diversity, which was to fit Kallen's definition of democratic humanism: one that "cannot favor any race or cult of man over any other; nor any human doctrine and discipline over any other." Kallen's "orchestrations of humanism with democracy" has no place for orthodox Christianity, which is ridiculed, particularly in its Catholic form. Democratic humanism, the appropriate outlook for a democratic society, can only tolerate a tolerant deity, one that "brings forth impartially all the infinite diversities of experience and who allows men to survive or to perish by their own dispositions notabilities."[37]

The democratic pluralism and democratic humanism Kallen advocates are intended to benefit all of mankind. Thus he moves beyond the question of national planning toward a global perspective. He invokes a future "international mind," formed by scientific attitudes, and envisages a UN consisting entirely of democratic nations. This internationalism should introduce social and economic reforms in order to foster both pluralism and the "liberal spirit."[38] These would require the nationalization of at least some of the means of production and substantial redistribution of wealth aimed at furthering individual human betterment. Kallen perceived no contradiction between his economic measures and free enterprise, which "satisfies the natural preference of natural men."[39] His economic policies were intended to humanize "great economic and financial undertakings" that "deal with men and women as if they were merely animate tools, merely beasts of burden." Among those forms taken by "arbitrary and authoritative" rule of the kind Kallen wished to abolish are "religious establishments and political orders which are as totalitarian as cartels and monopolies as hierarchical as armies."[40] Liberal democracy should lead to the overthrow

37. Horace M. Kallen, *The Liberal Spirit: Essays on the Problems of Freedom in the Modern World* (New York and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1948), p. 190 and pp. 91-127.

38. *Ibid.* pp. 47-67; see also Horace M. Kallen, *The Future of Peace* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941).

39. *The Liberal Spirit, op. cit.*, p. 218.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 220. Kallen moves easily between apparently contradictory positions. Thus, in "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," in John Dewey, ed., *Creative Intelligence: A Recovery of Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt and Co. 1917), pp. 409-67, he insists that values are both subjective and irrational, but also guides for social progress. Some of these "interests," which are "relations, responses, attitudes subjectively obvious and irrational," can be transformed into "expressive ideas" and, most importantly, into the vision of experimental science. While this argument may be demonstrable, it is not clear that Kallen proves it in either this particular essay or his observations about cognition in *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method*, Vol. XV, pp. 252-55.

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of such "tyrannical" structures, which Kallen associates specifically with General Franco's regime in Spain. It would not be an unjustified leap to think that such despotic structures included, along with Soviet Communism, Catholic theocracy and corporate capitalism, both of which Kallen attacks at length. Left unanswered is what or who would control that "government for the people" which would bring down anachronistic powers.

It did not seem strange that liberal social planners in the US and elsewhere stressed public education and value-formation in the context of defining "industrial democracy." Their project of rebuilding society presupposed the filling of social space with appropriate ideas and concerns. What had to be decided was not whether a socialization of education should occur, but what public ideology squared best with social progress. On this point there were differences, which became perceptible over time. They reflected the changing views concerning historical progress and the power the state might properly claim in remolding individual lives and communal habits.

From the founding of *The New Republic* down to the 1960s, liberal collectivists in America appealed to a science of public administration and to the ideals of a *national* welfare state. Both scientific method and the national interest were ready counterweights to be used by social planners against local opposition. Nationalization of decision-making has remained a useful means for American reformers down to the present, intent on removing perceived patterns of social and gender discrimination. Multiculturalism, the movement toward open borders, and the extension of Fourteenth Amendment protections to illegal aliens have signaled the journey of American liberalism from a national to a global educational project. In the US, this trend has grown particularly pronounced in "civil rights policy making." As has been pointed out, "Equality is not a concept without controversy. Changes interfere with human prejudice, tradition, and economic demands. Compliance with laws is a function of the benefits of noncompliance being outweighed by the benefits of compliance. It is important to note that courts have become havens for oppressed groups in our society. The other branches are more responsive to established, more powerful groups who can influence elections and provide funds for campaigns."[41] Aside from the colored reference to "powerful groups," which can certainly be applied to policy-making judges and administra-

41. Arthur Champagne and Stuart Nagel "Minimizing Discrimination Based on Race and Sex," in Theodore Lowi and Alan Stone, eds., *Nationalizing Government* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978), p. 334.

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tors, the statement is correct in viewing compliance to social policy as an essential objective of a nationalized American administration. Contemporary policy-makers have set out to achieve equality of esteem and pursue this end by trying to modify social behavior.

III

Several objections may be registered concerning an evolving liberal democratic ideology. It may be argued that this ideology is barely worth discussing. It describes a mere by-product of socioeconomic changes that would have occurred without individual visionaries or collective visions. Industrialization, urbanization, and other processes engendered industrial democracies, which then developed into welfare states out of popular demand. These welfare states required managers to deal with their complex problems, much as corporate capitalism called forth a similar managerial elite.

A related form of this corporate argument can be found in C. Wright Mills and James Weinstein. They do not deny the cultural and social impact of political bureaucratization, but attribute it to the extension of corporate capitalism into government. Once business titans organize a late-capitalist global economy, this economy imposes its own corporate structure on the state. Thus there emerges a capitalist welfare regime which mirrors an already bureaucratized economy.[42] In a variation of this theme, Samuel T. Francis has stressed the "isomorphic" nature of polity, the economy, and society present in a managerial order. All these elements have become part of the same bureaucratic model which dominates the present age. As in Mills and Burnham, for Francis ideology takes a backseat to social forces in explaining modern political organization. All see visions as mere epiphenomena of the process by which classes make themselves economically dominant and try to control other groups. In Gramsci's language, values are the means by which the ruling class establishes "cultural hegemony." They therefore wield no power outside their instrumental use.[43]

Interesting as they may be, all these attempts to unmask managerial ideology fail to take ideas and values seriously. One could organize a welfare

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 334-35.

43. James Weinstein, *The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State.1900-1918* (Boston: Beacon Press,1968); C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) and Samuel T. Francis, *Beautiful Losers: Essays on the Failure of American Conservatism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), pp. 60-87 and 95-117. For another penetrative attack on the corporate state from the Old Right, see Murray N. Rothbard, "War Collectivism in World War I," in Ronald Radosh and Murray Rothbard, eds., *A New History of Leviathan* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), pp. 66-110.

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state which provides social services without instilling a liberal democratic ideology. Similarly, one could have built the German Autobahn and increased the social benefits of German workers in the 1930s without establishing a Nazi regime. Likewise it would be possible for the American government to provide entitlement programs for its middle-class without enforcing what are now unpopular quotas for designated minorities. In all these cases, welfare states in industrialized societies have done more than address the majority's material demands; they have also tried to shape or reshape social relations to fit particular worldviews.

It is hard to demonstrate that managerial elites have consistently benefited by pushing their own bodies of belief. To the extent they embraced Hitler's global vision, Nazi administrators were rushing headlong into cosmic violence and arbitrary personal rule. Similarly, no major American newspaper or presidential candidate (except for Pat Buchanan) has called for restricting immigration, and neither *The New York Times* nor *The Wall Street Journal* will even publish an immigra-tion-restrictionist argument except to ridicule it.[44] Yet, faced by what is now predominantly Third World immigration (between 1981 and 1990 35% of *legal* American immigrants came from Central and South America), the majority of respondents to both *New York Times*/ CBS and *Newsweek* polls in 1993 favored significant reductions in the number of immigrants being admitted into the US. By a 50% to 30% margin, *New York Times* respondents concurred.[45] On the immigration question, including social services to illegal immigrants, politicians and journalists are almost without exception pitted against a growing popular consensus. The reason is not undemocratic arrogance on the part of these groups. The elites' understanding of democracy is based on globalist and managerial premises which people do not accept wholeheartedly. Its adherents in government, however, embrace such an ideology out of genuine conviction. They insist on agreement even with aspects of their worldview least likely to resonate among the people.[46]

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44. See, e.g., *The Wall Street Journal* (January 26, 1990), p. A-14; (March 16, 1990), p. A-14; (April 30, 1990), p. A-1; *The New York Times* (October 20, 1990), p. A-20; (December 3, 1991); (June 20, 1991), p. A-22. All these commentaries call for expanding Third World immigration and broadening the right of asylum. Cf. also Francis Fukuyama, "Immigrants and Family Values," in *Commentary* 96 (August 1993), p. 2.

45. *Newsweek* (August 9, 1993), pp. 16-23.

46. Thus, when conservative Republican Congressman Dick Armey lectures his Texas constituents on the need for even higher levels of immigration from Mexico, it is not done because of opportunism but out of ideological fervor. See Armey's remarks and the positive response to them in *The Wall Street Journal* (May 24, 1995), p. A-16.

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It is also incorrect to believe that those who built the modern welfare state were unaware of its theoretical architects. Croly's work had a profound effect on both Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. According to Arthur S. Link, "Roosevelt read [Croly's *The Promise of American Life*] with enthusiastic approval, and it helped him systematize his own ideas. In any event, he at once began to translate Croly's abstruse and heavy language into living political principles that the rank and file could comprehend."[47] Croly chastised and supported Wilson, who responded to both actions with respect. In an often quoted November 21, 1914 *New Republic* editorial, Croly scolded Wilson for believing that his "economic reorganization" of the American nation should end with the creation of two agencies, the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Trade Commission. Wilson's satisfaction with such meager change, thundered Croly, "shows he is a dangerous and unsound thinker upon contemporary political and social problems."[48] Wilson took this scolding to heart and, after consulting progressive intellectuals, worked to prove he was worthy of their esteem. In 1916, he cultivated them for reelection as president, and Link marvels at "the way in which independent progressives — the social workers, sociologists, and articulate intellectuals — moved into the Wilson camp."[49]

A similar development occurred during the New Deal, when in the fall of 1935 the FDR administration moved decisively toward controlling business. Having seen himself stymied by the Supreme Court, which struck down the National Recovery Act and other forms of federal interference in interstate commerce, FDR stressed the need for structural changes in American government. His relations with industrialists and corporate executives became increasingly adversarial.[50] Moreover, his attempted packing of the Supreme Court to create a favorable majority dramatized his willingness to override opposing branches of the federal government. By 1936, FDR had forged an open alliance with organized labor and the newly formed mass industrial union, the CIO, joined the Democratic Party. FDR's spirited support for the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, sponsored by New York Senator Robert Wagner, betokened this burgeoning alliance with

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47. Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era. 1910-1917* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 19.

48. Cf. Croly's editorial note in *The New Republic* (November 21, 1914), p. 7.

49. *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era*, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

50. Cf. Raymond Moley, *The First New Deal* (New York: Harcourt & Brace,1966), pp. 355-60; Basil Rauch, *The History of the New Deal, 1933-1938* (New York: Capricorn, 1963).

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the working class. After the passage of the act, the federal government created a National Labor Relations Board which oversaw labor-management disputes. It also guaranteed to unions the rights to organize and collectively bargain, regardless of the wishes of managers or owners.[51]

FDR's actions can be seen as driven by non-ideological concerns: e.g., his own political position in a country beset by depression and in which wealthy industrialists were electorally outnumbered; or his exasperation with a hostile Supreme Court. There is no reason to assume all New Deal politicians read Rexford Tugwell or agreed with the industrial policies of those Brain Trusters FDR periodically consulted. Besides, Democratic politicians, along with Republican ones, were interested in holding offices and enjoying the benefits of their incumbency. Even so, like Wilson (a president he had served and admired) and his cousin, Theodore, FDR, had considered himself a Progressive. His trusted advisors, such as Tugwell, Harold Ickes, Adolf Berle, and Raymond Moley (before he defected from the New Deal) read *The New Republic*, respected Croly and identified their own liberalism with social planning. Like Wilson, the Swedish Social Democrats and the English Labourites, FDR did not live and act in an ideological void. His moves to nationalize economic problems, to put the federal government on the side of mass unions and to provide for scientific management of social issues reflected the liberal collectivism becoming dominant in his time. In the US, these stands had the explicit endorsement of those whom Link sees as moving into the Wilson camp in 1916: "the social workers, sociologists, and articulate intellectuals."

Too much has been made of the fact that the liberal-social democratic welfare state was conceived or planned as something different from what it became. Along with Dewey, the Wilsonian founders of *The New Republic*, Walter Weyl and Walter Lippmann, were self-declared socialists; and their mentor and cofounder, Croly, did not deny the use of that term in describing his own politics. In 1932, Tugwell expressed unabashed admiration for Soviet industrial policies. In one memorable statement, he explained that "the interest of the liberals among us in the institutions of the new Russia

51. Allan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Knopf, 1995), pp. 15-65, 86-174, 201-26 and 265-72. Brinkley is particularly thorough in demonstrating the almost hand-to-mouth redefinition of liberalism which went on during the New Deal. He recognizes the connection between American ideas about social planning in the interwar period and the "new liberal" legacy left by earlier Progressives and European Social-Democrats. Despite his obvious sympathy for New Deal liberals, Brinkley does not hide the disjunction between their views of government and society and those of traditional liberals.

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of the Soviets has created wide popular interest in 'planning'."[52]

Such remarks can be misleading for those plotting the genealogy of the democratic welfare state. Some American Progressives and New Dealers were deeply impressed by the Soviet experiment, and others, like the young Kallen, endorsed with equal enthusiasm the model of social planning associated with Mussolini.[53] There were also discernible ethnic nationalist and eugenic concerns in the platforms of interwar Scandinavian socialism, and there is evidence of radical rightist impulses operative in Swedish social democracy into the early 1940s. All of this, however, misses an obvious point. Managerial ideologies have borrowed from each other and invoked the same "historical crisis" without becoming identical. The attempt to find a common denominator for all modern managerial regimes has produced useful speculation as attested by the works of Burnham, Adolph Berle, and Bruno Rizzi. But one should not rely exclusively on this denominator, lest it divert us from the crucial differences among managerial states. The distinctions between Nazi Germany and Western welfare states overshadowed the shared forms of public administration, Burnham outlined in 1940. Focusing on structural similarities can be instructive, but should not come at the cost of ignoring institutional and ideological differences. Only one political managerial model has triumphed in the industrial West by the end of the 20th century, and that model is by now recognizably American and intertwined with liberal democratic ideology.

Looking at the cumulative results of this managerial dominance, Higgs notes a "substantial expansion of government authority in our economic decision-making."[54] "Given capitalist colors by the form of private property rights, the system has denied the substance of any right whenever governmental authorities have found it expedient to do so."[55] In this system of economic control and diminishing property rights, he insists, the federal

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52. *The New Republic* (January 21, 1931), p. 259.

53. See Kallen's endorsement of the Italian way in *The New Republic*, (January 12, 1927), pp. 207-13. The rest of this issue, including the editorial note of Croly is devoted to an "Apology for Fascism." Such apologies do not prove that Kallen and Croly were fascists, any more than that Tugwell, Dewey, and Dewey's disciple Sidney Hook (all of whom were then celebrating the "Soviet experiment") were Stalinists. These social planners were still shopping for models that might be applied to an American "liberal" managerial state. In the late 1920s *The New Republic* characteristically stressed the merits of both fascist and Soviet efforts at social reconstruction. See John Dewey's series of six articles about his visit to Soviet Russia in *The New Republic* (November 14, 1928), (November 21, 1928), (December 5, 1928), (December 12, 1928) and (December 19, 1928).

54. *Crisis and Leviathan*, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-19 and 258-62.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

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government (and its derivative state administrations furnished with federal funds and directives) can redefine or infringe on any group's liberty. This encroachment on property in the name of industrial planning and social equity became the ice-breaker for the state's continuing invasion of society.

In a study of federal agencies and their powers since the New Deal, Gary Lawson observes that "the post-New Deal administrative state is unconstitutional, and its validation by the legal system amounts to nothing less than a bloodless revolution."[56] This modern regime is predicated on a constitutionally dubious power asserted by Congress and the President, but found nowhere in the Constitution, the delegation to nonelected agencies of continuing oversight and judicial authority. Lawson notes that the Constitution does not allow any branch of the federal government to create new and permanent instruments of public control; nor should they be able to confer upon these agencies judicial powers intended in Article Three for a system of courts. According to Lawson, it is also questionable whether the Commerce Clause in Article One can be honestly applied to justify the 20th century administrative state. That clause provides for congressional oversight of interstate commerce, but is not a standing invitation to establish agencies. Thus, it does not give Congress the power to regulate all economic activities, as opposed to mere commerce, and it does not authorize Congress or its created instruments to interfere in commercial enterprises operating entirely within states.

Lawson points to an interpretative problem even jurists who do not share his politics acknowledge: the American administrative state rests on its own political — or political-scientific — logic and not on constitutional legitimacy. As one social democratic legal scholar admits, it may be necessary to ignore this "deficient ratification" of the post-New Deal administrative state and to treat that authority as a constitutional given.[57] To some extent, Lawson confirms this point. Given a choice between constitutional propriety and public administration dispensing material favors, most voters would gladly take the second: "Modern champions of the administrative state seem loathe to abandon the sheltering language of constitutionalism. But tactical considerations aside, it is not at all clear why this is so. . . . After all, the moral relevance of the Constitution is hardly self-evident."[58]

What Higgs overlooks but Lawson does not is the resounding popular

56. Gary S. Lawson, "The Rise of the Administrative State," in *Harvard Law Review* (107 (1994), 1231.

57. Bruce Ackerman, "Constitutional Politics/Constitutional Law," in *Yale Law Review* 99 (1989), pp. 510-15.

58. Lawson, *op. cit.*, p. 1253.

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success of what they condemn. The liberal democratic welfare state gained vast power because it gave most people what they wanted. The "substantial expansion" of its authority into "economic decision-making" fortified its mass base. One reason this secular process has continued until now is that the welfare state has built a consensus around economic management. The redistribution of earnings and the furnishing of social services have both middle- and lower-class backing. Any perceived threat to middle-class entitlement programs can destroy a conservative candidate running for elected office in almost any voting district.[59] It is this democratic consensus for government economic policy that has allowed the American government to go beyond welfare state measures into social engineering. The management of economic democracy has provided public administrators with what Carl Schmitt calls "social legitimation for the exercise of political power," popular acceptance of a claim to moral authority made by those expanding their political control. More and more administrators have used that authority to implement a liberal democratic ideology to which they have assigned global implications.

This socializing mission has also assumed messianic tones; and both Dewey and the then US Commissioner of Education, John Ward Studebaker, affirmed the importance of bringing to Americans their own "democratic faith."[60] In this view, liberal democracy is not merely about a set of procedures or constitutional arrangements. It is a "living faith," which the American government should impress first on its own citizens and eventually on the rest of humanity. In a massive biographical study, David Fromkin makes an observation telling as much about his own faith as the one attributed to his subjects: "In the First World War, Wilson had inspired people of Franklin Roosevelt's, Harry Truman's and Dwight Eisenhower's age to go out and change the politics of the rest of the planet. It took nearly a century; it was by no means entirely of their own doing, and for the most part they did not realize where the forces would lead that they were putting into motion . . . but, in the end, they did it."[61]

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59. Kevin Phillips, *The Politics of Rich and Poor* (New York: Knopf, 1995); and "It's the Republicans' Turn to Go Too Far," in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, (October 12, 1995), p. A-7.

60. See John Ward Studebaker, "Salvaging Democracy through Education," in *Parents' Magazine* (November 1934) p. 10; "The Education of Free Men in American Democracy," in *School Life*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (October 1941), pp. 5-7; and Studebaker's John Adams Lecture at UCLA on March 18, 1948, "Education and the Fate of Democracy."

61. David Fromkin, *In the Time of the Americans: F.D.R.. Truman, Eisenhower, Marshall and MacArthur* (New York: Knopf, 1995), preface.

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This passage underscores the belief in the imperative to export liberal democratic ideology. America is not to be a state or society of the kind that exists elsewhere, but the instantiation of a political model informed by "democratic faith." Today that faith is filtered through a managerial state, which expresses it through abstract ideals assumed to have universal validity. That faith must be made to apply to others if its truths are the permanent and transcendent ones its proponents claim they are. But the content of those truths has changed over the last eighty years, and today's democratic ideology of pluralism has weakened the legitimacy of the state that proclaims it. The pluralist version of the democratic faith has come to incorporate doctrines which are breeding popular discontent. As Lawson emphasizes, the modern administrative state stands or falls not on constitutional legality but on the demand for its services. When those services entail disagreeable social and cultural costs, the "liberal democratic" regime faces an erosion of its popular legitimacy as well as its constitutional foundation. The appeal to a partly resurrected 19th century liberal vocabulary of rights will not cause these problems to go away. The same trick has been tried too often to hide the fact that the administrative state is now widely viewed as undemocratic.[62]

This problem does not disappear because the regime in question claims to be "liberal." By now that decontextualized term means whatever the user wishes it to, providing he can browbeat others into accepting his definition. Liberalism is now freedom, taken to mean what judges, public administrators, and journalists see fit to impose on others. No one would be free, i.e., be saved from discrimination and unfairness, if their lives were not supervised by experts. This freedom, which the administrative state claims to be helping its citizens realize, is what today's democratic faith is about; and for more than half a century it has worn the tag "pluralistic."

By now the proclaimed essence of liberal democratic life, pluralism has moved through the decades in various guises. Its advocates have claimed to be pursuing strategies of national unity, enhanced freedom and cultural diversity, but have contributed steadily to a different result, the growth of state managerial power. Pluralists have not been satisfied with redistributing income and providing material benefits as functions of mass democratic government. They have simultaneously pushed other social designs, such as cultural inclusiveness, "secular-scientific" values, and global education on increasingly resistant citizens. Whence Christopher Lasch's perception

62. Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen, "Rethinking Federalism," in *Telos* 100 (Summer 1994), pp. 12-14.

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of a widening gulf between the political-professional class and everyone else: "The masses today have lost interest in revolution. Indeed their political instincts are demonstrably more conservative than those of their self-appointed spokesmen and would-be liberators." Furthermore "upper-middle-class liberals have mounted a crusade to sanitize American society . . . to censor everything from pornography to 'hate speech' and at the same time, incongruously to extend the range of personal choice in matters where most people feel the need for solid moral guidelines."[63]

Lasch's invective against America's transnational elite is noteworthy in view of its source. Its author is not an apologist for pre-New Deal America but an avowed egalitarian. A morally conservative socialist, he celebrates blue-collar virtues against both yuppie administrators and revolutionary pluralists. Another man of the Left now turned against administrative rule, Pierre Rosanvallon, notes the inescapable tie between pluralism and the ascendancy of experts. In a recent interview, he asserts that "pluralism treats misunderstandings as the lack of rationality: on one side stand competent experts and on the other the incompetent many. For the latter to be rational and informed, it suffices that one accepts the opinions of the former."[64] Like Lasch, Rosanvallon points out the structural presuppositions of pluralist ideology. Without the rule of administrators and social experts, pluralism would not have survived so long as the American "democratic faith." That formulation of this faith has been connected to a political class, and that class both benefits from and believes in the doctrines it spreads.

63. Christopher Lasch, "The Revolt of the Elites," in *Harper's Magazine* (November 1994), p. 40.

64. Pierre Rosanvallon, "Repenser la Gauche," in *L'Express* (March 25, 1993), p. 116.

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Three Faces of Democracy: Cleisthenes, Jefferson, and Robespierre

Thomas Fleming

In February of 1860 Abraham Lincoln came to the Cooper Union in New York City to explain his vision of the American founding. Dismissing the charge that he and his Republican Party were revolutionary, he tipped his hand in telling Southerners: "You would break up the Union rather than submit to a denial of your Constitutional rights" — a virtual concession of the South's argument — and concluded with an appeal to the principle that right is might. In his government, however, Lincoln demonstrated the contrary principle, by arresting Democratic politicians, suspending *habeas corpus*, defying the Supreme Court, and waging the most bloody war of the 19th century. Lincoln's presidency was, as James McPherson and M. E. Bradford have argued from opposite sides of the political spectrum,[1] the second American founding, which turned a constitutional system established by Washington, Adams, and Jefferson as a regime of liberty into a radical Jacobin state rooted in the principle of equality.

The motto for the new regime was provided by the Gettysburg Address, in which Lincoln, with the religious imagery and murky syntax that were habitual with him, described the US as "a nation conceived in liberty and

1. J. M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1990). M. E. Bradford was repeatedly pilloried for his views on Lincoln, and his revisionism cost him an appointment as director of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For his views, see "The Lincoln Legacy: A Long View," in *Modern Age*, No. 24 (1980) pp. 353-63; *A Better Guide Than Reason: Studies in the American Revolution* (La Salle, Il: Sherwood Sugden & Co., 1979) pp. 185-203; and his review of McPherson, in *Chronicles* (December 1991), pp. 30-31.

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dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Lincoln is far from the only political thinker to use such language, and it is a commonplace to call the US an experiment in democracy or a laboratory of democracy — as if human lives were suitable subjects for experimentation.

Much of this rhetoric may be summarized in the phrase "American exceptionalism." While other nations have evolved organically over a long period, the American colonists threw off the chains of bondage to tradition: they destroyed the idols of patriarchy and theocracy, and they quickly learned to create new forms of society more suitable to the novel conditions in which they found themselves.[2] Common sense and a knowledge of other periods of history suggest it is precisely colonists and provincials who cling most tenaciously to old traditions (Scots Gaelic, for example, was better preserved in Nova Scotia than in Scotland). Patriarchy and kinship solidarity did not break down rapidly in the New World, and when they did, it was under the same circumstances as in the Old World: urbanization and industrialization. In rural areas and on the frontier, Americans were more patriarchal than Europeans. Many New England villages were really a series of hamlets made up of extended families. When Americans went west on the overland trail, they went in family groups, over half of them in kin-groups larger than nuclear families.[3]

As for such ancient traditions as feudal aristocracy and laws establishing the so-called patriarchy, Americans kept what they could, although John Locke's proposal for orders of nobility did not take deep root even in the aristocratic colony of South Carolina. But it would be foolish to conclude that the upper classes of Virginia, New York, and the Carolinas regarded themselves as anything but aristocrats.

To invoke aristocratic Virginia seems a paradox, for it was in the Old Dominion that the leaders of American democracy created a political theory emphasizing the rights of the common man as well as the political party that staged Jefferson's revolution of 1800 and, later, the triumph of

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2. Cf. Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

3. For persistence of Old World family patterns, see Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970). For attitudes toward the family, see James A. Henrietta, "Families and Farms Mentalité in Pre-industrial America," in *William and Mary Quarterly*, No. 35 (1978), pp. 3-32. For the frontier, see John Mack Faragher, *Men and Women on the Overland Trail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 33: "Close to half of all the emigrant families traveled in larger-than-family parties based on kin . . . most often the kinship party was a version of an extended family."

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Andrew Jackson. But Jefferson, although he may have affected simplicity of dress even in the White House, ate and drank like a lord. He consistently described his party as republican ("democratic" was only a subordinate adjective). His young follower, John Randolph, who out-Jeffersoned Jefferson in his attachment to the principles of 1800, was notorious for his aristocratic eccentricities. "Sir, I am an aristocrat," he once declared, "I love liberty, I hate equality." Such contradictions in the Virginians moved their Yankee enemy, Fisher Ames, to exclaim: "Here citizens imagine they are democrats, and in their abstract theories are in fact democratic; but their state policy is that of a genuine aristocracy. . ."[4]

To educated 18th century Englishmen (this category includes the leaders of the 13 sovereign American republics) democracy usually meant mob rule. When General Gage wrote in 1772 that "Democracy is too prevalent in America,"[5] he meant by it something like too little regard for rank and authority and too great an insistence on local self-governance. As governor of Massachusetts, Gage moved quickly to suppress town meetings, but without success. At the other end of America, the Rev. Charles Woodmason was making similar complaints against the men of the Carolina back country: "In our present unsettled Situation — When the Bands of Society and Government hang Loose and Ungirt about Us — when no regular Police is establish'd but every one left to Do as Seemest him Meet. . ."[6]

What really bothered this Anglican parson was not so much the lack of order as the fact that the order came from the people, most notably in the form of the Regulators, the first important vigilance committee in American history. From this perspective, American or Jeffersonian democracy is not so much a political ideology as it is the general American habits of self-reliance and local self-governance, both formal and informal. This is exemplified in the two great institutions questioned by Gage and Woodmason: New England town meetings and Southern Lynch law, understood in the broadest sense to include the entire panoply of rough justice, from the shivarees staged to protest an unsuitable marriage to the great vigilante movements of Montana and San Francisco. Early American democracy was the determination to mind one's own business. Today it has come to

4. "The Dangers of American Liberty" (1805), in *Works of Fisher Ames* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1983).

5. C. E. Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), vol. II, pp. 615-16.

6. Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, R .J. Hooker ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 226.

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mean just the opposite, i.e., the right of whoever can claim a plurality of votes to tyrannize the whole.

Along with Jefferson, the framers of the Constitution generally applied the term Republic to their handiwork. This meant, of course, a state without any hereditary monarchs. It also implied a system of laws and rules, "a government of laws and not of men," in Burke's famous phrase. Like their great prototype, the Roman Republic, which coined the term *res publica*, meaning something like the nation's business or the commonweal, most republics were oligarchic. A republican form of government need not be in any sense democratic. Public office may be restricted either to hereditary nobility or to plutocracy (or both) and the franchise may be limited to the holders of substantial property.

Democracy, in its classical sense, refers to a commonwealth in which the citizens participate directly in legislation, as in the assemblies of ancient Greek city-states. But Greek democracies, from a modern perspective, seem hardly democratic since only citizens could participate. Excluded were women and children, slaves and freedmen, foreigners and the children of foreigners. By the mid-5th century, to qualify as an Athenian citizen a man had to prove both his mother and father had been citizens.

Many of the tendencies associated with democracy today were included in the term *isonomia*, i.e., equal or proportionate access to justice and the political process.[7] As a rallying cry of democratic reformers in Athens, *isonomia* would come to mean a gradual lowering of property qualifications for public office and restrictions on aristocratic privileges such as those embodied in the court of the Areopagus, made up exclusively of former magistrates. Oddly enough, the Athenians did not think voting was particularly democratic, since rich aristocrats were able to use their wealth and influence to secure election. Anyone who has taken a look at America's millionaires club — the US Senate — will begin to appreciate the Athenians' skepticism. But since no politician before Ross Perot has ever considered direct democracy practicable in the US, the term democracy has come to be used loosely to refer to the US republican system of government, based on a very broad franchise and rooted in the principle of *isonomia*.

Such an approach is bloodless and abstract. Anyone can design a system apparently "democratic" in this sense, while at the same time reserving real power and privilege to an elite class of hereditary noblemen, capitalists, or party members. The Soviet Empire, after all, consisted of People's

7. Martin Ostwald, *Nomos and the Beginning of the Athenian Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.)

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Republics run by and for Communist Party cadres. American democracy today is a kind of Chinese menu giving American citizens a choice of candidates from column A and column B, determined by the leadership of two national parties, each of them as venal and stupid as the followers of Brezhnev and Gorbachev. The Governments of the French Revolution are also described as democratic, although each succeeding regime was increasingly less republican, less legitimate, and less open to the people than the administration of Louis XVI before he summoned the Estates General. What made Americans democratic in the sense intended by General Gage was not the political theory embroidered in the Declaration of Independence or the system of government that would be established by the Constitution. Put simply, it was the independent British character — Celtic and Anglo-Saxon — weakened by the growth of the Tudor state but regaining life and health in the fresh air of the American woods and plains.

The distinctiveness of American democracy may be judged by comparing it with its Greek predecessors and its French successor in at least three main areas: the persistence of tradition, the treatment of religion and property, and the adherence to federalism. Athenian democracy was not the product of ideological revolution but the result of a gradual evolution beginning in Mycenean times. Of Athens' early history only legends remain. Yet, it seems to have followed a typical Greek pattern of monarchy, slowly devolving to aristocratic oligarchy in the hands of a few noble families. The economic crises of the sixth century, however, led to a period of almost constant civil strife between the rich who owned property and the poor who gradually had to sell or mortgage their property and even themselves in order to stay alive, between the three regions of Attica dominated by different noble clans and pursuing different economic activities, and between hereditary landed aristocrats and a new mercantile class.

The major steps toward constitutional government were taken first by Solon the lawgiver, who abolished slavery for debt, reduced the qualifications for office-holding, and created a democratic jury system;[8] then by Peisistratus, the tyrant who assisted the lower classes economically and gave Athenians an orderly government whether they wanted it or not.[9] They were folowed by Cleisthenes, who established a system of *demes*, i.e., peoples or villages, both as electoral wards and as the basis of local government to break up the old clan rivalries. He devised a new tribal organization that

8. "The people being master of the vote (i.e. in juries) becomes master of the political system." Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia* IX.1.

9. *Ibid.*, XVI.

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connected rather than divided the different sections of Attica. Finally, Ephialtes and Pericles, under whose leadership the Athenians stripped the Court of Areopagus of its political powers, opened up the political process even to the lowest class of paid laborers.

The Athenian democratic evolution, from Solon's reforms to the death of Pericles, took almost two centuries. Despite periods of civil strife, the process was gradual and orderly. Property-holding was not disturbed, although agrarian reform of this sort had been demanded of Solon. Until Pericles' death in 429, the Athenians continued to choose their leaders from the traditional aristocracy, and even later the ruling elite included many members of prestigious families.

Even more remarkable was the Athenian sense of solidarity, partly rooted in the myth that they were an autochthonous people. Although ostracism was used to limit factional struggles, there were very few wholesale persecutions of defeated parties. "The Athenians permitted the friends and kinsmen of the (Pistratid) tyrants, as many were not implicated in their offenses, to remain in the city."[10] Even when democracy was restored after the fall of the Thirty, it was illegal to prosecute a citizen on the charge that he was a friend of the tyrants (though such a taint might aggravate another charge in the minds of the jurors). Despite periods of strife and unrest (as in the reign of the Pistratids and the periods of civil war that ended the rule of the Thirty), the growth of Athenian democracy — slow, organic, and inclusive — stands in stark contrast to the turbulent histories of ancient Syracuse and late Medieval Florence.

Similarly, the development of American democracy was a gradual evolution requiring almost two hundred years in which colonial legislatures acquired the habits and discipline of self-government. The Revolution, which used to be known as the War for American Independence, far from representing an ideological renunciation of the British Constitution, began as an affirmation of the traditional rights of Englishmen and an insistence that colonial legislatures, acting under the authority of the Crown, had the same rights to rule the colonies as the English parliament had in England. Their grievances against excise taxes and writs of assistance were paralleled by similar, if less violent outbreaks of indignation in Britain, and over such American statesmen as John Adams, John Dickinson, and Thomas Jefferson asserting their reverence for British traditions and the rights guaranteed by Magna Carta and the

10. *Ibid.*, XXII. 4.

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Petition of Right. When they came to draw up a Constitution, that document could not be ratified in many states without a guarantee that the good old English rights would be protected in a set of amendments. Indeed, a good book could be written on the Bill of Rights to show the extent to which they were no more than affirmations of traditional English liberties, the exception being the 10th amendment, designed as a guarantee of state sovereignty.

In America, too, there was a continuity in the ruling class. Although many of the best American families were loyalists, particularly in the Northeast, the Virginian and Carolinian aristocracies joined the Revolution. Even in Massachusetts, a new aristocracy was created out of the old bourgeoisie, e.g., the Adames and the Otises. Some loyalists, particularly those who had collaborated with the British or had fled to Canada, suffered confiscation of property; and in some places the War was a genuinely civil war of neighbor against neighbor. But there was no terror, no show trials, and after the war, many loyalists returned to their homes and lived quietly.

Despite the rhetoric of republican equality that emerged in the political campaigns of William Henry Harrison and Andrew Jackson, the White House and Senate were dominated by the gentry. Harrison was a scion of one of Virginia's richest and most powerful families, while Jackson himself was a successful general and land-speculator rather than a redneck. Of greatest importance was the fact that Jackson had earned his way into the ruling class by his services during the War of 1812 and later in the Seminole War. The first real outsider to reach the upper stratum of American politics was Abraham Lincoln, and he was despised by most of the leaders of his own party including the members of his cabinet. Indeed, it was their very unfamiliarity with Lincoln that terrified the Southern leadership and helped to precipitate secession.

Class differences mattered less in the New World, particularly in the South, where a modest farmer claimed the right to be called a planter and a gentleman. Commenting on the difference between the American and French revolutions, Walter Scott points out that nothing could be more different than the circumstances of the two countries; in America, the population consisted for the most part of rugged and self-reliant agriculturalists, while France — like the rest of Europe — was beset by a "howling, bawling, blustering, rabble of a city where a dram of liquor or the money to buy a meal is sure to purchase the acclamation of thousands." Above all, Scott concludes, America was a society of independent states,

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which "arranged their new government so as to make the least possible alteration in the habits of their people."[11]

The French did just the opposite. Unlike the Athenian and the American examples, France's first experiment with democracy took a mere 10 years to run its course, in which younger and younger and ever more radical leaders succeeded in killing the King and Queen, first nationalizing and then abolishing the church, driving all opposition out of government and into exile at the hands of the executioner, nationalizing private property, and destroying every traditional foundation of the French social and political order. The Jacobins made a serious effort to eliminate the aristocracy, and they were relentless in persecuting any rivals that could be successfully characterized as on the Right. In the Paris Terror, they killed more of their fellow republicans than they ever killed aristocrats.

The creed pronounced by the Jacobins was embodied in their Declaration of the Rights of Man, passed in a variety of forms. It has little in common with Jefferson's Declaration of Independence and has virtually nothing to do with the Bill of Rights, both of which were typical products of the Whig political mind. In sum, American independence was a mere secession from Crown and Parliament, and it was followed by a written constitution designed to provide effective government while preserving the sovereignty of the several states and preventing the federal government from repeating the abuses of George III and his ministers. The French Revolution, by contrast, represented a violent break with French tradition and a subversion of the most fundamental institutions of French life.

To document this claim requires little effort. The most fundamental criterion is that of religion, preserved under Athenian and American democracies, but ravaged by the Jacobins. This is not to say that neither the Athenians nor the Americans made innovations in the relation between the religious and political orders; on the contrary. In the Athenian case, the traditional gods were increasingly incorporated into political life, while the temples on the Acropolis and the religious festivals of Attica were part of a state religion designed to celebrate the city's past and to strengthen its social order.[12] Athens was among the most pious cities of the ancient world, and much of their great literature is devoted to a defense of their religion and morality against philosophical speculations.

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11. Sir Walter Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French* (Paris: Galignani, 1828) chap. xii, p. 95.

12. See Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: the Funeral Oration in the Classical City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

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Sometimes, as in the case of Damon, Anaxogoras, and Socrates, their defensiveness turned aggressive. Four and a half centuries later, when St. Paul visited the city, he observed that the Athenians were the most superstitious of peoples.

In America, little was done to disturb the inherited religious arrangements. The whole point of the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom was to prevent the federal government from interfering in the exercise of religion. Those states, like Massachusetts and South Carolina, which preferred to retain their religious establishments did so without harassment from Congress or the Federal Courts. Other states, such as Virginia, gave up their church establishments (although not without controversy), but the object was not to free society from religion. On the contrary, as the free-thinking Jefferson explained in his Second Inaugural Address (4 March, 1805), "In matters of religion, I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the constitution independent of the powers of the general government." Previously, on January 1, 1802, Jefferson had written to a group of Connecticut Baptists that a "wall of separation between church and state" was a guarantee of religious freedom — not, as now interpreted, as the power of government to set people free from religion.

States such as Jacobin France, Communist Russia, Nazi Germany, and revolutionary Mexico all made war on established and inherited religious practices. The Jacobins were not content with nationalizing church property, but went on to outlaw Catholicism and establish an *opera bouffe* state religion, the worship of the Supreme Being. Their festival of Reason had all the solemnity of a high school skit performed by drunken football players and cheerleaders. If the Jacobins could not see the humor in their own invented cult, French Catholics in the Vendée were less than amused by the war of extermination waged against them.

In its treatment of the religious faith of the majority of its citizens, the American regime now takes its cue from the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks. By turning the Bill of Rights on its head, the federal courts are able to eliminate prayer from schools and *crèches* from city squares; and by means of federal grants to religious colleges, the federal government has secured the right to purge them of religious symbols and ceremonies. Liberals celebrate these proceedings as a triumph for the rights of man, without ever considering that the winners are not the people — overwhelmingly Christian — but the small and powerful elite class of federal judges who now dictate matters of conscience. Americans have become so thoroughly indoctrinated that they refuse to admit we live under a system of state

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religion, represented principally by the public schools supported by our tithes. They indoctrinate children in a religion that directly contradicts everything taught by the religion of the American majority.

Little need be said about the Athenian state's innovations in economic policy. Apart from pursuing a vigorous naval policy and establishing a colonial empire in the Aegean, Athens hardly differed from her neighbors. This is not to say that Athens was particularly *laissez-faire* in its economic policies. Such concepts are alien, for the most part, to the ancient world. (Under Pericles, Athens welcomed talented entrepreneurs and craftsmen from the entire Greek world, while at the same time jealously guarding her citizenship.)

Envy of the rich is the perennial temptation of the lower orders in a democracy, which favors the poor and incompetent at the expense of the well-born and the able. As the "Old Oligarch" explains, "the poor and common people, when they do well, because of their numbers increase the power of democracy."[13] Still, Athens is remarkably free of the confiscatory policies of Jacobin France or New Deal America. What they did have was a policy of mandatory voluntarism — a system of liturgies, i.e., public service contracts that were assumed by the wealthier citizens. Liturgies were assessed at different levels and might be directed toward outfitting a naval ship, celebrating a religious festival, or supplying a set of tragedies with choruses and actors, costumes and sceneries. Rich Athenians, far from complaining about the liturgies or shirking their responsibilities (although this was done), more often boasted of doing more than they were required. One man claimed to have spent nine and a half talents in only 8 years, "more than twenty times the property requirement for hoplite service," the guarantee of something like middle class status.[14]

America has had nothing like a system of formal liturgies, but a tradition of voluntarism combined with public pressure on the rich has insured an unparalleled expenditure of private wealth on charitable and cultural enterprises. There is nothing to compare with American philanthropy in modern Europe, although the charitable and religious foundations of the Middle Ages are an important parallel.

The founders of the American republic held more or less conventional economic views. They were not, for the most part, conscious adherents of free market capitalism, which was first systematized theoretically by

13. Xenophon, *Athenaion Politeia* I.4.

14. M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), pp. 150ff.

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Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, a work published coincidentally in 1776. As Forrest McDonald has explained, the American founders were mostly believers in one or another form of mercantilism. But in devising a Constitution whose primary effect was to limit the power of national government they unleashed a tremendous burst of creative economic energy. A *laissez-faire* government, at least *de facto*, combined with an enterprising people and an open continent waiting to be exploited resulted in unprecedented levels of material prosperity and economic opportunity.

From the first, however, the plutocrats and their agents — primarily Alexander Hamilton — were doing everything they could to shackle the economy of farmers and entrepreneurs in the interest of the finance-capitalists of the Northeast. But every time the Hamiltonians were successful, they spawned a counter-revolution, first of the Jeffersonians, then the Jacksonians. It was only in the 1870s, after the Republican Party put itself in a position to despoil first the South and then the entire nation, that the power of the plutocracy became strong enough to threaten American political and economic liberty. The misguided progressives and populists correctly diagnosed the problem, but it was not until Roosevelt's first term that they realized big government was not the answer to big business. As the western progressive William Borah remarked in a letter, "monopoly capital and monopoly government are twin whelps from the same kennel." Borah believed that arrogant plutocrats own the government lock, stock and barrel, and they use the tax money confiscated from working people to buy votes from any discontented group which will take their bribes.

The French Jacobins can justifiably be described as pioneers of this technique. From almost the very beginning, the Revolution played to the expectations of the Paris mob, and much of the Convention's economic policy boils down to a policy of confiscating the fruits of the peasants' labor and using them to bribe the *san-culottes*. The Commission des Subsistences (established 1 Brumaire, October 22, 1793, under the direct supervision of the Committee of Public Safety)[15] used its more than 500 employees and countless specialists and local agents to control "all sectors of the economy, from production to transport and commodity distribution. They oversaw foreign purchases and domestic requisitions, set prices, and ensured the provisioning of Paris." The Commission was opposed to traditional "family-run mixed farming," which made farmers and peasants relatively self-sufficient and favored an almost exclusive concentration on wheat production

15. Marc Bouloiseau, *The Jacobin Republic, 1792-1794*, tr. by J. Mandelbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 101.

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in order to supply bread to the Convention's urban supporters.

The cornerstone of the Convention's economic policy was Robespierre's Law of General Maximum, which gave the Committee of Public Safety sweeping powers to fix prices and confiscate goods. Jacobin economic policy was a system of total control: "It was not confined to controlling prices. It included punitive sanctions, even the death penalty, against those who did not observe its price and other regulations; it regulated wages and salaries; it possessed the right and the powers to prescribe the precise place of economic transaction, and the prerogative, repeatedly exercised through *commissaires en mission*, to conscript the workforce for economic tasks."[16]

The Jacobins also closed the stock market by force, banned dealings in precious metals, confiscated the property of political rivals and supposed enemies and seriously considered distributing confiscated property to loyal revolutionaries. Enforcement was brutal and carried out by *armées révolutionaires* operating both in the capital and in the provinces.[17] It was in its economic regulations, above all, that the Jacobins revealed themselves as apostles of centralized political power and the supporters of Paris against the whole of France.

Churches, associations and corporations formed by craftsmen, farmers, and shopkeepers are, to use a cant phrase of political sociology, mediating structures between the powerless individual and the all-powerful state, and for the triumph of the state and its masters to be complete, one must either eliminate or subjugate all such intermediate associations. Even more fundamental, perhaps, than religion, are the bonds of kinship and the sense of common identity derived from membership in a coherent community — a province, a city, an intact family.

In Athens, changes were made in the system that incorporated kinship groups into the state, but none of these changes was designed to centralize power in the organs of government. Before the 5th century, families were organized into the conventional Ionian tribes, which were further broken down into phratries and clans, both of which had religious functions.[18]

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16. Ferenc Feher, "Was Jacobinism Proto-Socialism?" in *The Frozen Revolution: An Essay on Jacobinism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 128-54 and 135.

17. Richard Cobb, *The People's Armies: The Armées Revolutionaires, Instruments of the Terror in the Departments*, tr. by Marianne Elliott (New Haven: Yale, 1987).

18. For tribe and phratry, see Kurt Latte, *Klein Schriften zu Religion, Recht, Literatur und Sprache der Griechen und Römer* (Munich: Ch. Beck'sche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1968), Denis Roussel, *Tribu et Cité* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1976), and Gaetano de Atthis Sancto, *Storia della Repubblica Ateniese* (Rome: Fratelli Bocca, 1912).

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Since these territorially based kin-groups were controlled by feuding aristocratic leaders, most of whom were rivals of the Alcmeonid clan, Cleisthenes — an Alcmeonid — devised new tribes, with representation from all parts of Attica, and made citizenship contingent not upon membership in a phratry (an aristocratic lineage group) but on residence and membership in a *deme,* i.e., a village or settlement.[19] These *demes* registered citizens, carried on their own religious festivals, and acted as military units in time of war.[20]

The Athenian state, covering about the same territory as Luxembourg, was as decentralized as 19th century Switzerland. The state, if it is proper to speak of such a thing, could not even make citizens; that depended upon the *deme*, as in Switzerland it still depends on canton and commune. At the level of kinship, the new Athenian democracy left the clans, phatries, and households undisturbed to carry out their traditional business. So little power was invested in the general governments that most disputes and even crimes had to be settled by a mixture of self-help and arbitration. Even murder could not be prosecuted except on a charge made by the victim's next-of-kin.[21]

The decentralization of the early American republic has been discussed by, e.g., Adams and Jefferson. It puzzled Tocqueville and Frederick Jackson Turner. On the formal level, the Constitution reserves all rights not explicitly granted to the general government to the states and to the people, and until 1860 the states were generally able to make good their claims to sovereignty within their boundaries. State sovereignty died, along with the Old Republic, in a bloody war of conquest, an American Vendés, directed by the first American Jacobin, Abraham Lincoln.

In the Old Republic, as Tocqueville observed, even the state govern-

19. For persistence of regionalism in Athens, see Raphael Sealy, "Regionalism in Archaic Athens," in *Essays in Greek Politics* (New York: Maryland Books, 1965) pp. 9-38.

20. David Whitehead, *The Demes of Attica, 508/7-c. 250 B.C.: A Political and Social Study* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 224. On military service, see Isaeus, 2.42, where the speaker boasts of performing *gymnasiarchia in deme* but also of serving in tribe and in *deme* on campaigns. For an excellent interpretation of Cleisthenes, see Christian Meier, *The Greek Discovery of Politics*, tr. by David McLintock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

21. On family solidarity, see Gustave Glotz, *La Solidarité de la Famille* (Paris: 1904). On the persistence of lineage, see John K. Davies, "Athenian Citizenship: The Descent Group and the Alternatives," in *Classical Journal*, No. 73 (1977) pp. 104-21. On resolution by arbitration, see Virginia Hunter, *Policing Athens: Social Control in the Attic Lawsuits, 420-320 B.C.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). On Athenian homicide laws see D. M. MacDowell, *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963).

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ments were weak; they contented themselves with regulating only the state's general business and left cities, counties, and parishes more or less free to mind their own business. Outside of theocratic New England, local governments interfered little in the lives of the citizens, who preferred to carry on their affairs through families and the voluntary associations Tocqueville admired and Frederick Jeckson Turner deplored. Barn raisings and quilting bees provided for the common welfare, while justice was often a matter of self-help or committees of vigilance. Duels and lynch mobs have been given an evil reputation in popular fiction and films, but the best scholars on the subject point out that the American frontier was far safer than the United States have ever been since, and the vigilantes and lynchers were not angry mobs but disciplined groups of citizens defending the social order against thieves and murderers.[22]

In the 1770s the same spirit of informal order was displayed by the Sons of Liberty in Boston and by local militias that had been raised and trained throughout Massachusetts for the specific purpose of resisting the government. It is these neighborhood and village training bands, consisting of the householders in arms, that inspired the framers of the 2nd Amendment to guarantee the right to bear arms. The genius of the American system — like that of the Athenian — was its very lack of system, which called forth the greatest effort and creativity from its citizens. Whenever someone does something for someone else that he might do for himself, the result is to make the latter less creative and more servile, and the American republic was founded on the principles of individual liberty, community autonomy and state sovereignty. What a contrast with the Jacobin state, which accelerated the concentration of power that had been set in motion by the *ancien regime*. At the outset of the French Revolution, many people longed for a restoration of the power of the parliaments and a revival of the provincial estates, some of which survived and operated in Brittany and Languedoc. But as the engine of revolution got under

22. For the classic study of vigilantism, see Richard Maxwell Brown, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); for a particular study of vigilance in two western towns, see Roger Mcbrath, *Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes: Violence on the Frontier* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); and for a discussion of self-help and vigilance as cultural universals, see Thomas Fleming, *The Politics of Human Nature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1988), pp. 174-76. The Rev. Charles Woodmason, who engaged in polemics with the Carolina Regulators, nevertheless conceded to them that "you did, What was the duty of others to Do, and they would not. You put the laws into execution. But it was without authority — and because those trusted with the Execution of them, Were the known Violators and breakers of them." Woodmason, *op. cit.* p. 285.

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way, the power of Paris and its mob only increased, and to advocate anything like provincialism or even to criticize the Paris mob laid oneself open to the charge of feudalism, which proved fatal to the Girondins.

It is conventional to believe that the establishment of the administrative system of Departments and districts was designed to promote localism. Actually, all the Abbaye de Sièves seems to have had in mind was efficient administration and a limitation on the king's executive power.[23] Later, confronted with an upsurge of genuine provincialism, the Convention responded to St. Just's plea[24] that "The countryside must be brought to heel" (and his Oct 10th demand for a revolutionary government until the end of the war) by passing the decree of 14 Frimaire II,[25] declaring that "the National Convention is the sole center of government initiative" and that "all constituted bodies and public officials are placed under the immediate supervision of the Committee of Public Safety."

The *procureur* of each commune became a national agent; the growing power of the departments was stopped in its tracks, and the impotent districts were managed by an agent of the central government. The real and lasting effect of Sieyès' destruction of feudalism and the creation of the departments was to destroy any traditional "obstacles to the exercise of authority by a central administration."[26]

Even the primary social bonds of marriage and family were not left untouched.[27] The solemn Christian sacrament of marriage was replaced in September, 1792 with a civil service consisting of a few formalities concluding with: "You are married." In principle, at least, the Catholic marriage had been an indissoluble union, although it had taken the French Church nearly a millennium to civilize the Franks on this point. Under the new law, divorce was as easy as marriage.[28] For this new sacrament, the *procureur* of Paris gave a little sermon to divorcing couples: "Young peo-

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23. See Yann Fauchois, "Centralization," in François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds., *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, tr. by A. Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 332-39.

24. Saint-Just, *Oeuvres Complètes de Saint-Just* (Paris: Editions Garard Lebovisi, 1984), pp. 520*ff.*; see also Marc Bouloiseau, *op. cit.*] p. 190.

25. Albert Soboul, *The French Revolution 1787-1799*, tr. by Allan Forrest and Colin Jones (New York: Vintage, 1975), p. 336.

26. Francois Furet, *Interpreting by French Revolution*, tr. by Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 77.

27. Jean Robiquet, *Daily Life in the French Revolution*, tr. by James Kirkup (New York: MacMillan, 1965), pp. 77-86.

28. Decree on divorce passed September 20, 1792. See J. H. Stewart, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), pp. 333-40.

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ple whom a tender engagement had already united, the torches of Hymen are lit again for you on the altars of liberty; marriage is no longer a yoke, a heavy chain; it is more than what it ought to be — the fulfilling of Nature's grand designs, the payment of a pleasant debt which every citizen owes the Patrie."[29]

Children were also a debt to the Patrie, according to the pro-natalist propaganda; and in the juvenile literature and republican catechisms of the day children were instructed to describe themselves as children of the Patrie. According to St. Just, children belong to their mothers until the age of 5, after that to the Republic until they die. Actual reforms were more modest. The crises of wars, foreign and civil, and the disruptions of revolution prevented the Jacobins from doing anything beyond establishing a rudimentary state system of public schools, although many of them, at least, must have sympathized with the proposal to deprive political suspects of the right to raise their children.[30]

I began my discussion with the concept of *isonomia*, equal access to justice and to the political process. It is precisely *isonomia* that the American state is bent on destroying through the vehicle of civil rights legislation that sets up separate status categories of victimized minorities. The principle of double jeopardy, for example, is routinely waived if the supposed victim belongs to a minority group, while it is now being argued that ethnic minorities have the right to maintain their customs, even when those customs are illegal: animal sacrifice is a religion for some Caribbeans, rape and abduction are prenuptial rights for some Southeast Asians, and carrying concealed weapons may soon be lawful for Sikhs in Canada. In fact, the entire apparatus of civil rights laws, hate crimes statutes, and affirmative action guidelines are nothing if not the most obvious indications that equality before the law is, like the old federal structure of the American republic, a dead letter.

It would be a serious mistake to think that the victimized minorities are the primary winners in a struggle with the majority. They are mere pawns in a game known well to the ancients. As Aristotle observed, tyrants always champion the rights of the poor and weak, who are used to check the power of the only rivals the tyrants have: the aristocracy. Today,

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29. Walter Scott describes the divorce law as something which fiends might have devised as a means to perpetuate their mischief from one generation to another, and he quotes the actress Sophie Arnoult's witticism that "republican marriage was the sacrament of adultery. See *Napoleon*, *op. cit.*, ch. xvii.

30. Bouloiseau, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

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this vast bureaucratic empire that absorbs almost half the nation's wealth can only maintain its power by suppressing whatever is left of the independent-minded middle and working classes. If there is a populist revolution brewing, it is because some small portion of productive Americans have begun to look at their paycheck and conclude that they are spending half their time working not for themselves and their children but in order to pay the inflated salaries of state and federal employees, and to provide economic, legal, and political advantages to minorities.

When the people reassert themselves in referenda, as in Colorado, where they tried to eliminate legal and political privileges for homosexuals, or in California, where they are attempting to deny welfare benefits to illegal aliens, the shock troops of the elite class — the federal courts and their supporters in the press — rush in to veto their decisions — decisions arrived at by a process resembling the direct democracy of Athens. This widening conflict between the federal courts and the popular will is a recipe for a populist revolution.

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The Non-Cartesian Subjects East and West

Karatani Kôjin, Non-Cartesian *cogito*, or *cogito* with a Difference
Jean-Pierre Vernant, Preface to *The Greek Man*
Fredric Jameson, Representations of Subjectivity
David Loy, Transcending the Transcendental Subject: A Buddhist Perspective
Noé Keiichi, The "Non-Cartesian" Subject in Japanese Philosophy
Naoki Sakai, Cultural Difference, Subjectivity, and Watsuji Tetsurô
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The Original Model of American Democracy and the Turn to Statism

Frank Adler

There is no doubt the US has evolved into a statist system vastly different from its point of departure. Yet the proposition that the original American model was somehow replaced or subverted by its French counterpart seems historically false and theoretically misleading.

Briefly and schematically, by the French or Jacobin model I understand a centralized, unitary state which on principle brooks no regional diversity, opposes subsystem autonomy, prevents or discourages communal or associational meditation between individual citizens and the state. This state, moreover, has rendered itself progressively autonomous with respect to the selection and training of its personnel, its administrative *modus operandi*, its culture or *esprit de corps,* and has displayed remarkable historical continuity regardless of social change or actual changes of regime (republics, empires, Vichy). Furthermore, the development of this strong state was marked, reciprocally, by a weakening or devitalization of society, reflected in an absence of community life, relatively underdeveloped private associations, a diminished capacity for initiative and self-organization locally, and outside hierarchical state structures. The Left's so-called decentralization project in the early 1980s entailed no fundamental reorganization of the administrative system, but simply added one more layer of bureaucracy at the local level. Ideologically, the French model expresses itself in an abstract, illiberal Jacobin universalism, intolerant of division, faction or particularity. These debilitating effects were noted by such diverse critics as Tocqueville, Constant and Durkheim. Such a model was promoted neither by American intellectuals nor policy-makers,

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although some might argue that the consequence of American statism was largely the same, regardless of intent or self-conscious activity. In fact, to the degree Americans borrowed models from Europe, probably a stronger case could be made, at least at the micro level, for Germany (vocational education and university reorganization, applied natural science in education and industry, and, most importantly, given the linkage between state administration and specialized knowledge, applied social science).

This is not an unqualified endorsement of American exceptionalism. It simply means one should not be reduced to the other. The point should be to explore precisely how Americans responded to the generalized contingencies of modernization experienced throughout the West during the past two hundred years. State intervention was ubiquitous, though its modality and timing varied, coming later and less extensively in the US than in Europe.

One might begin with the transition from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism in Europe during the 19th century. Market mechanisms, left to their own devices, threatened that very modicum of social stability without which capitalism could not function. Adaptive measures were rather quickly and universally taken, regardless of diverse national state structures and ideologies. As Karl Polanyi put it, "the change from liberal to 'collectivist' solutions happened sometimes over night and without any consciousness on the part of those engaged in the process of legislative rumination. . . Victorian England and the Prussia of Bismarck were poles apart, and both were very much unlike the France of the Third Republic or the Empire of the Hapsburgs. Yet each of them passed through a period of free trade and *laissez-faire,* followed by a period of antiliberal legislation in regard to public health, factory conditions, municipal trading, social insurance, shipping subsidies, public utilities, trade associations, and so on."[1]

However, it was not until the 1930s and 1940s that full consciousness of great changes that state intervention had wrought became evident across the political spectrum. In an epoch of Soviet planning, Keynesian economics, Roosevelt's New Deal and fascist corporatism, numerous observers — Werner Sombart, Peter Drucker, Friedrich Pollock, Friedrich Hayek, *et. al.* — noted that "economic man" was dead and that the 19th century, the so-called "century of economics," had given way to a "century of politics." The state, which had been rolled back during an age of liberalism, reasserted its primacy. Though some celebrated this

1. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1957), p. 146.

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repoliticization of society, and others, like Hayek, warned of a road to serfdom, it had become obvious that, despite the great differences between communism, fascism and the New Deal, all had in common the centrality of the state.

Of the analyses of this period, most suggestive is Pollock's classic essay "State Capitalism: Its Possibilities and Limitations."[2] From this perspective, state intervention was necessary to fulfill two related functions which would benefit capitalists and workers respectively: (1) secure long-term conditions for profitable capital utilization and economic growth; and (2) secure the loyalty of workers through policies on wages, benefits and social security. Whereas in the 19th century society was "only mediately political and immediately economic,"[3] in the 20th century a process of "refeudalization" had taken place whereby the state not only mediated all social relations but directed the system as a whole.

The Original American Model

The factors presumably accounting for American exceptionalism are well-known: the absence of pre-existing feudal structures and feudal relations, the frontier, abundance of territory and natural resources, etc. The most important was the absence of a "state" in the European sense, or, put another way, the US had a vital society before it had what might be recognized as a state. This clearly set it apart from the European cases, all of which had pre-existing absolutist or quasi-absolutist states that had to be rolled back during the age of liberalism. Beyond inheriting the rather minimal British sense of the state, Americans from the outset enjoyed all the victories of European liberalism without ever having had to fight its battles against the Old Regime. Louis Hartz' claim, derived from Tocqueville, about Locke working better in America than in England, is to the point.[4] Generally speaking, America was a bourgeois fragment, spun off Europe, landing on ideal soil for its unhindered development. Without a European-style aristocracy or peasantry, or even a proletariat, for that matter; without fundamental disagreements concerning the ends of government, a rather non-theoretical, unreflective Lockean liberal consensus developed, which provided a minimal but necessary background of normative assumptions and expectations that allowed most people most of

2. Included in the anthology, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, edited by Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Continuum, 1990).

3. Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1970), p. 97.

4. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt, 1955).

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the time to go about their business and everyday lives without worrying about the state.

It is well-known that Tocqueville, visiting the US in the 1830s, accounted for the vitality of American democracy in terms of the reciprocal effects of two variables so dramatically absent from political life in France: local self-government and voluntary associations. Careful readers of Tocqueville, however, are struck by an even more revealing observation — the absence of a state as Europeans would recognize and expect it: "Nothing strikes a European traveler in the United States more than the absence of what we would call government or administration. One knows that there are written laws there and sees them put into execution every day; everything is in motion around you, but the motive force is nowhere apparent. The hand directing the social machine constantly slips from notice. . ." [5] Instead of a centralized, external state which managed everyday life, Tocqueville encountered a vibrant, decentralized, self-governing society; the latter flourishing due to the absence of the former. Nothing of the sort could be found in Europe: a society without a state.

Tocqueville emphasized two additional features. The first is a sense of community conventionally treated as being rooted in religion, mores, habits of the heart, etc. Yet, just as importantly, Tocqueville also defines community in terms of *what people do* in common as opposed to *who they are* by origin or background, or, put differently, who they are is largely a matter of what they do, how they interact communally, a collectively self-organized reciprocity of functions: practical interdependencies. Tocqueville emphasizes a solidarity borne of practical activity. After all, America was a new world to be created. The further west he travelled, the more he wondered how newly arrived village inhabitants, not knowing one another, could nevertheless constitute working communities. Here there were no "givens" except the mutual recognition that one's survival

5. Elsewhere Tocqueville writes: "We have seen that in the United States there was no administrative centralization. There is scarcely a trace of hierarchy. There decentralization has been carried out to a degree that no European nation would tolerate, I think, without profound discomfort. . ." "Europeans, accustomed to the close and constant presence of officials interfering in almost everything, find it difficult to get used to the different machinery of municipal administration. Generally speaking one may say that those little details of social regulations which make life smooth and comfortable are neglected in America, but the guarantees essential to man as a member of society exist there as everywhere. In America the force behind the state is much less well regulated, less enlightened, and less wise, but it is a hundred times more powerful than in Europe. . ." "What I most admire in America is not the *administrative* but the *political* effects of decentralization." See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Garden City: Anchor, 1969), pp.. 72, 89, 92, 95.

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depended largely on a newly-shared present and future, not the relative security of a common inherited past.

Related to this practical sense of community was a distinctive brand of pragmatism, long before the later articulation of a formalized, philosophical pragmatism at the beginning of the 20th century. The urbane, sophisticated Tocqueville was repeatedly shocked at the degree to which Americans seemed to learn from practical experience rather than books, at their self-referential rejection of abstractions, their casual disregard for literature and fine arts.[6] Nevertheless, despite his offended sense of aesthetics, Tocqueville betrays unqualified admiration for America's practical accomplishments which issue from this practical, experiential brand of reason: "These same Americans who have never discovered a general law of mechanics have changed the face of the world by introducing a new machine for navigation."[7] This pragmatic turn toward solving problems and getting things done is as well a reflection of the Lockean liberal consensus stressed by Hartz. Only people who take ends for granted can concentrate on means; this compared to the contentious, ideological style of European politics, where ends were always in dispute between class enemies, revolutionaries and reactionaries, believers and heretics, where means therefore were so difficult to agree upon and secure.

From the Original Model to Statism

The question now is how and when did the US join the general universal trend toward statism. The causes were not dissimilar to those which presented themselves in Europe in the transition from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism. Capitalism, entrepreneurial or corporate, is a disruptive force — "creative destruction" in Schumpeter's words. Markets universalize themselves, destroying or remolding anything that stands in the way or operates according to antithetical principles — family, community, religion, tradition, particularity, difference. liberals turned to the state

6. As he wrote: "It must be admitted that few of the civilized nations of our time have made less progress than the United States in the higher sciences or had so few great artists, distinguished poets, or celebrated writers. . . His desires, needs, education and circumstances all seem to draw the American's mind earthward. Only religion from time to time makes him turn a transient and distracted glance toward heaven." *Ibid.*, pp. 454-456. Elsewhere he claimed that "In America the purely practical side of science is cultivated admirably, and trouble is taken about the theoretical side immediately necessary to application. On this side the Americans always display a clear, free, original and creative turn of mind. But hardly anyone in the United States devotes himself to the essentially theoretical and abstract side of human knowledge." *Ibid.*, p. 460.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 463.

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to limit the damage or restrict the scope of the market, "but the remedy often proves to be worse than the disease. The replacement of informal types of association by formal systems of socialization and control weakens social trust; undermines the willingness both to assume responsibility for oneself and to hold others accountable for their actions; destroys respect for authority; and thus tends to be self-defeating."[8]

The original model was constituted in an America still largely rural and agricultural. Though urbanization and industrialization would not be as wrenching as in Germany,[9] it did undermine (though not completely destroy) much of the original model. Unlike virtually all the European cases, the US did not have a pre-existing state to fall back on. This was both a strength and a weakness: a strength in so far as the state was alien to traditional beliefs and practices, both of which nourished a healthy suspicion of statism and stood as a potentially alternative basis for the resolution of new problems generated by modernization; a weakness in so far as these traditional beliefs and practices proved incapable of redressing or containing the new problems for which statist solutions were virtually unopposed. If the original model was a society without a state, that society could not itself mediate the very contradictions it generated.

The strains became evident from the end of the Civil War to the turn of the century. First the Granger movement and then Populism, reacting to threats posed by banking and railroad monopolies, harked back to the original model in terms of localism, self-organization, and cooperative enterprises. At stake here was not simply self-interest, but preservation of a traditional yet distinctively American way of life, one based on interdependent solidarity, grass-roots informality, and community. Then came industrial conflicts similar to those beginning to explode in Europe during the 1890s, for which the original model seemed to have no solutions, as these were fought by formally organized associations of labor and capital intrinsically national or at least supra-regional.

The 1930s are conventionally viewed as the beginning of American statism, primarily on the basis of the scope and extensive reach of New Deal programs. And indeed this is the first decade wherein the American state begins to resemble those of Europe in terms of regulation, social insurance and bureaucratic paternalism. However, the origins of this

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8. Christopher Lasch, "Communitarianism or Populism?" in Amitai Etzioni, *Rights and the Common Good* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 60.

9. Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Garden City: Anchor 1969).

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development can be traced to the Progressive Era, the first two decades of the 20th century. One version of this era portrays progressives using the state to break-up or regulate monopolies and trusts for the common good; the image of Teddy Roosevelt walking softly and carrying a big stick. The other version views it as one where big business itself promoted regulation to undercut weaker competitors and eventually control those very state agencies set up to regulate their respective sectors.[10] Here the fabled big stick turned out to be a juicy carrot.

More interesting, perhaps, is the ambiguous legacy of the progressives themselves. Prior to WWI, muckrakers battled big business in the name of the people and the public interest. During the war mobilization, they were engaged as propagandists for the war effort under the Committee on Public Information, entering into "strange alliances with men and movements they had previously opposed." Many supported the Espionage Act (enacted on June 15, 1917 and still in force in 1940) that led to the muzzling of free speech and the jailing of anti-war socialists, anarchists, radicals and pacifists, condoning "the cruel raids which brought suffering and death to radicals; they condoned the imprisonment of Eugene Debs."[11] After WWI, progressives took divergent directions, though all fundamentally statist. Some gravitated toward the Soviet Union, having seen the future and believing it worked. Others, interestingly enough, gravitated toward Italian fascism, thinking Mussolini had found a third "progressive" way between capitalism and communism.[12] In the war mobilization, still others saw a new model for cooperation between labor and capital and a corporatist-type of self-regulation under the aegis of the state.

For those who remained true to the earlier progressive commitment to return politics to the people, the election of Warren Harding was a shock and led to mounting suspicion of the electorate conjoined with a growing affinity for rule by experts. Exemplary here is Charles Merriam, who before the war was both a political science professor and a reform alderman of Chicago's Seventh Ward when Big Bill Thompson ran the city. Merriam even ran a hopeless campaign for Mayor in 1911, receiving the personal endorsement of Theodore Roosevelt. After the war, and especially

10. Cf. Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967); and Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy* (New York: Knopf, 1966).

11. Louis Filler, *Crusaders for American Liberalism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1939), pp. 372-374.

12. See John Diggins, *Mussolini: The View from America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972).

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after the election of Harding, Merriam left the world of politics and concentrated his efforts on pushing a new social scientism which would apply its findings to public policy. With the help of the Rockefeller Foundation, he founded the Social Science Research Council, and together with other members of the Chicago School such as Harold Lasswell, promoted political psychology and its specialty, voting studies, to explain the irrational basis of the very "people" for whom he once campaigned. A decade later, through the mediation of Harold Ickes, he joined Roosevelt's brain trust.[13] With Merriam one sees the linkages between progressivism, applied social science and statism, as well as the beginnings of a New Class comfortably situated in the interstice between the academy and the state.

Are there no alternatives to statism? Does anything remain of the original model? The latter has been undermined though not completely destroyed. Populism as a movement was a failed attempt at recovery, though the populist impulse in American politics has never remained dormant for long, given its repeated flashes and disappearances. Unlike the dominant European cases, American capitalism never marginalized agriculture nor the rural countryside (in part because there was *so much of* it). Without a vital agricultural base, American capitalism never would have assumed its primacy; agricultural exports have continually been strong while most manufactured commodities have had difficulty competing in international markets. Unlike most industrial countries, the domestic price of food is relatively cheap because fewer foodstuffs have to be imported. If Robert Reich is correct in his analysis of the restructuration of the global economy, it is traditional large-scale, nationally-based industry which is doomed to extinction.[14] Because of modern telecommunications and new technologies, the fixed costs of doing business has dropped, as has the price of entry into new and established markets. In many sectors, large concentrated pyramidal units are no longer efficient or cost-effective. Furthermore, because of modern telecommunications, industrial enterprises need no longer be clustered in urban areas. Gateway 2000 Computers, for example, one of the major IBM clones, is located in Sioux City, South Dakota, and promotes its rural identity through advertising as well as the bovine motifs of its shipping cartons.

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13. On Merriam, see Barry Karl, *Charles Merriam and the Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) ; Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959) and David Ricci *The Tragedy of Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

14. Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

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In rural America, aspects of the original model of American democracy and the populist impulse never died. Yellow Springs, the village where I reside, is managed by a locally-elected, unpaid council and its schools supervised by a locally-elected, unpaid board. The only upper-level bureaucrats in town are a city manager and a police chief, both hired by the council, and a superintendent hired by the school board. Beyond minimal routine tasks like maintenance, most activities in town are initiated and managed by volunteers, from running the community credit union to raising funds to expand the library, planting trees along the main drag, etc. The racially and economically diverse inhabitants enjoy a relatively high quality of life; few of their children get into serious trouble, many remain in town, and some have gone on with national distinction to more distant worlds of academia, opera, theater, the concert stage, as well as business. In short, rural villages like Yellow Springs work quite well in contemporary America. The rise and fall of statism, so dramatically felt in America's urban zones, has barely touched everyday life there.

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Up at the Fork of the Creek: In Search of American Populism

Clyde Wilson

"Populism" has so many different connotations that one may well wonder if the term is usable at all. It is not quite as bad, in this respect, as democracy. Populism" implies "the people." Thus, in most quarters, it is a favorable sign or symbol, a sought-after asset in the public forum. Its fate is similar to that of "liberalism," a term that in the 20th century has come to mean a very different set of phenomena than it did in the l9th century, to the point that its use can be extremely misleading. The hustings can destroy any political label. Consider the old Anglo-Saxon term Whig. Even at its clearest point of meaning, Edmund Burke had to distinguish the Old Whigs from the New. It meant something different in America than in England; and something different in 18th than in l9th century America.

Populism has suffered similar abuse. From the very beginning, however, American populism has been an expression of hostility to state power and those who exercise or seek to exercise it. It is no surprise then that most populists have looked to Thomas Jefferson, the great original American critic of consolidated power, as their patron saint, and that the history of populism is closely connected to the concept of the American Constitution as a restraint rather than a grant of power. Populists regard state power as always corrupt and corrupting, which is an inheritance of the English "Country" ideology or opposition value system which Americans absorbed deeply in the colonial period and which underlay the American War of Independence.

Populism, in the strict historical sense, refers to the People's Party which flourished in the later 19th century, in certain regions of the American

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Union. It has always been, at least in this country, a regional and not a class phenomenon. (I take this idea, as well as my title "Up at the Forks of the Creek." from an early essay of the late M. E. Bradford.) The People's Party is often spoken of as a "Midwestern" phenomenon. "Heartland" is perhaps a better term. But historically populism was not strictly a phenomenon of the Heartland, but of its far western fringes, and eventually or more so of the rural South and of the mining regions of the Far West, which gave it the peculiar counter-productive tangent of the Free Silver movement. There were no populists in Ohio, and they were a minority in Iowa.

In the Heartland one has to go all the way to the Mississippi to find a populist and all the way to the Missouri to find very many. In the South, contrary to what Left historians have assumed or claimed, there were no populists in the impoverished "poor white regions," but they were chiefly in the upcountry plantation belt, among the small planters and larger yeomen — the same regions that had been most in favor of secession in 1861. The Georgia Populist leader Tom Watson was tutored in politics by the Confederate statesmen Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens. Consider Leonidas Lafayette Polk of North Carolina, who was national president of the Farmers Alliance and was thought by many to be the frontrunner for the Populist presidential nomination in 1892, when he died suddenly. Earlier in life Polk had been sergeant-major of the 26th North Carolina Regiment, Confederate States Army, and as such had gone up Cemetery Ridge on the third day at Gettysburg. In both cases he had the same enemy. As Robert McMath has shown in *American Populism: A Social History*, the People's Party flourished chiefly in market agricultural regions of grain, cotton, and tobacco, which were suffering severe economic and social dislocation, and which were undergoing enough "modernization" to bring forth forms of organization that had not been seen among American agriculturalists before.

The greatest barrier to a proper understanding of American populism lies in the confusion that has been spread, wittingly and unwittingly, by liberal historians. Those who have professed to like populism have been guilty of more distortion than those who dislike it. The liberal establishment is always in search of respectable ancestors. This is why Arthur Schlesinger and Robert Remini have written their historical fantasies about Jacksonian democracy, portraying it as something it clearly was not, in order to locate precedents for New Deal liberalism.

Those who dislike Jacksonian democracy (or populism) have actually pictured it more accurately, if critically, than those who have claimed to

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favor it. A New York intellectual like Richard Hofstadter was more honest in picturing the populists as rural bigots than others have been in treating them as forerunners of various Left movements of later times. Of course, one man's rural bigot is another man's chosen of God.

The pre-Hofstadter generation of liberal historians who wrote about populism were progressives and largely small-town midwesterners, though not from the populist regions. They saw populism and the historical phenomenon of progressivism, which followed closely on its heels, as part of the same liberalizing, reformist era of American history. Were not both these movements reactions to political corruption, poverty, and the oppressions of capital? Did not both seek to restore democracy to the people and correct the abuses of the "Gilded Age"? Did not progressivism rise to the fore just as populism was declining?

In order to understand the conflicts and tendencies in American society from that time to the present, it is necessary to clearly grasp the differences between populism and progressivism. Populism was weighted toward the south and west — a product of the culturally most conservative parts of American society. It was backward looking, even reactionary, like most normal societies throughout history. New forces had brought new conditions which seemed unsettling and unjust. Populism was, and is, a defensive attempt to correct these new forces. Progressivism was weighted toward the north and east. It was a phenomenon of the most educated, modern parts of American society — a philosophy of the urban professional. Far from rejecting modernism, progressives embraced it as an opportunity. Its evils could be brought under control — by planning, expertise, organization. Such planning, of course, translated into wealth and power for the progressives, who became the liberal establishment. The long-term result has been an endless series of expensive, unproductive social plans, like the "war on poverty." Morality has almost come to be defined as holding the proper attitude toward progressive programs, and it is bad form to point out the self-interestedness of their proponents.

Populism is not an agenda, but a reluctant impulse of self-defense. Seldom have real populist leaders sought to make themselves into a new elite. What they have sought to do is to protect their people from oppressive officials.This certainly characterizes the American Revolution and the history of political ferment that preceded it. Today, it characterizes the much-discussed phenomenon of the Christian Right. According to alarmed liberals, bigoted fundamentalists are out to construct a police state and break down bedroom doors to impose their morality on more enlightened thinkers. But,

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of course, the truth is that millions of decent, often simple, Christians have been provoked into action by militant obscenity, blasphemy, and atheism invading the public sphere and officially sanctioned by the ruling elite. They are quite right. Separation of church and state in American tradition has not meant banishing all Christian values to the closet. All that is really desired is to restore the *status quo ante*.

Where the People's Party put forward specific measures, they were corrective — direct election of senators, cooperatives, free silver, regulation of railroads and banks in the interests of producers and consumers, tax on great wealth. They were not forwarding a socialist society but reacting to abuses of state capitalism. The Republican Party did not and never had favored an open economy. By free enterprise it meant private ownership with government support and subsidy. This is the only kind of free enterprise the Republican Party has ever favored. Charges of socialism levelled at the populists meant government acknowledgment of the complaints of agriculture and labor, which is the only kind of socialism the Republican Party has ever opposed.

To the extent populism was ideological, it rested not on an agenda of the future but a vision of a past Jeffersonian age of widespread private property and limited government. It was simply old-fashioned American republicanism. It may be that this kind of thinking is merely nostalgic and idealistic. But there is nothing sentimental about the possibility that there may have been a time when the US had a more honorable class of leaders and a higher sense of public ethics than now.

John Taylor of Carolina formulated the philosophy. It was not simply an idealization of agriculture, though that was part of it. And what is wrong with idealizing in favor of a healthier and more independent life for the mass of citizens? Taylor embodied the persistent and recurrent themes of American populism. He represented both a conservative allegiance to local community and inherited ways and a radical-populist suspicion of capitalism (in the sense of abstract finance), "progress," government manipulations, and routine log-rolling. In many ways, Taylor was a more authentic and representative Jeffersonian than Jefferson himself. Taylor's opposition to federal power, judicial oligarchy, paper money, stock jobbing, taxation, and expenditure was based on the belief — the essence of populism and the country ideology — that the world is divided between producers and parasites. The producers are decent folk, of whatever economic class, who labor for their daily bread and produce everything of real economic and moral value in society. They are subject, in the nature of the world, to endless depredations by people whose main occupation is

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manipulating the government for artificial advantages for themselves. These manipulators are eternal and come in many guises. They always appear plausible and public-spirited, be it Alexander Hamilton seeking national prosperity or Great Society bureaucrats seeking an "end to poverty."

Here is the essence of populism. Taylor defines its instincts and its political program. It is still a deeply embedded folk attitude among the American people. In the simplest terms, populism is the community defending itself against oppressive or inadequate agents of the state. "People" here is not a Marxist or even a particularly democratic term. It is a distinction between the body of the community and the wielders of state power and their beneficiaries.

In understanding the distinction between populism and progressivism, consider the difference between two third party presidential candidates of recent history. George Wallace came from the Black Belt of Alabama, laid the evils of American society personally at the doors of the establishment, and was supported by small town people, disaffected workers, and small businessmen. John Anderson came from the most rockribbed Republican and abolitionist district of Illinois and was supported by well educated upper middle class people who thought American problems were to be solved by turning over power to such clear-minded and honorably motivated persons as themselves. George Wallace is a populist. John Anderson is a progressive.

To bring it even closer to the present day — the campaign of 1992. Who was a populist? Jerry Brown certainly enunciated certain populist themes. Yet, in the final analysis, he and his supporters are homeless progressives, who think that if they get into power they can do better — that social problems are solvable by the right sentiments and policies. Pat Buchanan also enunciated, even more clearly, certain populist themes, which were successful as far as they went. But he suffered from a residual identification with the Republican Party establishment and thus fell short of thoroughgoing populism. And what of Ross Perot? He articulated various confused and undigested elements of both populism and progressivism: on the one hand, national direct referendum; on the other, technology and management.Thus it was never clear whether he wanted to be a populist or a progressive. This mess perhaps explains why in the end Perot was found to be somehow incomplete and unsatisfactory — even by those predisposed to be sympathetic.

Populist instincts are powerful enough for there to have evolved two distinct types of pseudo-populism to gull the people. In the election of

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1840, the Whig campaign managers of General William Henry Harrison put on a very "populist" campaign, with torchlight parades, log cabins, coonskin hats, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too," and no platform. Was this populism? No, merely demagoguery. Here began the real vulgarization and degradation of the American political process, which has proceeded apace ever since — by conservative politicians, whose main objective (to recharter the national bank) was hardly mentioned in the election. Here was the beginning of the vulgarization and not, contrary to most historians, in the 1828 election of the aristocratic Andrew Jackson.

In the 1860 election, Abraham Lincoln, an ex-Whig and corporation lawyer fronting for manufacturing and banking interests, campaigned, insofar as his ambiguous and oracular statements can be made to cohere, against an imaginary "slave power" of the South conspiring to enslave the northern working man. He also went under the slogan, "Vote Yourself a Farm," referring to the contemplated Homestead Act. Was this populism? No, just demagoguery. Even the museum-specimen progressive-conservative Herbert Hoover promised "A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." And a presidential candidate named George Bush, from a notorious investment banking family, was compelled to blather on insincerely about "no new taxes" and "family values."

The other common form of pseudo-populism practiced is that of modern bureaucratic liberalism, which seems to address the concerns of the people but really uses them as an opportunity to push another agenda. The New Deal certainly drew much of its support from populist impulses. But it became the expression, under Franklin D. Roosevelt and his "brain trusters," of the welfare state and managerial state elites. Consider what happened to the recent "crime bill." The people clearly think criminals are a problem and that they should be locked up faster, more often, more surely, and longer. In Clintonian pseudo-populism this was subtly transformed into "crime" (a disembodied abstraction) being a problem. Therefore, we need to spend more money on playgrounds in the inner city to keep the boys from going astray. None of this, of course, represents any real populism. Leaders who actually believe us "yahoos" should get what they want offer a real threat to the Establishment. They have to be relegated to the fringe, blitzed by the media and, in the case of Huey Long and George Wallace, shot.

American history was for a long time written from the New England viewpoint, and many tend to think of localism and self-government — populism — in terms of the New England town meeting. This, too, leads

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astray. The parts of the Heartland settled by New Englanders were least likely to support the People's Party. The New England town meeting did involve direct democracy, but within a very limited and closed society. It was not populist. It was always infused with a sense of religious communalism and collectivism, and purposefulness in terms of social regimentation and improvement. In New England, only when one moves beyond the core, up into the wilds of New Hampshire, can one begin to find real populism. At any rate, New England died, for all practical purposes, a long time ago, and offers no model for modern America. In fact, its inheritance offers the greatest obstacle to populism — that overwhelming impulse for respectability and conformity which Tocqueville saw as characteristic of Americans. He looked mostly at New England and areas influenced by it.

Populism is not respectable. The Bryans, the Wallaces, the Huey Longs are not respectable middle-class types. This is the largest single limitation on their success, the best weapon of the vested interests in putting down genuine populism. This is why innumerable beleaguered midwestern farmers could not bring themselves to abandon the respectable Republican McKinley for the wild man Bryan in 1896. McKinley proved more "popular," if not more "populist," than Bryan. One of the unnoticed aspects of the Wallace campaign was the attack on the immensely wealthy foundations. The suspicion of great wealth and unevenly distributed wealth is a normal and natural sentiment. It does not relate to socialism or to enmity to private property, but simply to the ancient conception that widely distributed property makes for the health and freedom of society. As Wallace pointed out, foundations such as the Ford, the Rockefeller, the Carnegie, etc., enabled great fortunes to escape taxes and to use their wealth to inordinately influence public policy against the wishes of the people. From the viewpoint of democratic philosophy, his position is unfaultable, and it will make a great platform plank for a future populist leader, should one appear. Liberals, who picture themselves as radical critics of privilege, have always gotten along comfortably with great wealth and made use of it. Great wealth is the initial stage of the concentration of power and an essential means for the manipulation of society by safe reforms — those reforms that enhance the state and its guardians. Thus the pseudo-populist Clinton appointed Robert Rubin, one of the sleaziest of Wall Street operators, as his chief economic adviser.

In America, as opposed to many countries in Europe, the question of minorities must always come up. Minorities are people and are a part of the polity. However, they are by definition not a part of the core people. It

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would be foolish to think minorities could be enlisted on the side of populism. By their very status as vulnerable, minorities are the most pro-establishment part of the population. In the classic case of African-Americans, they were first wards of the slaveholders, then of the Republican Party, and since the New Deal, of the Democratic welfare state. As long as the *status quo* is reasonably good, and it has never been better for African-Americans in terms of benefits/burdens ratio, they are not likely to upset any apple carts. No group of Americans is more committed to the existing welfare state and more opposed to fundamental change.

American colonial society was the freest, most self-governing, and most minimally governed society the modern world had seen; an inheritance that has remained a deep folk memory. There was never enough government force to rule against the community. Land and slaves could be acquired more easily than in Europe, and skilled labor was vastly more independent and valuable. Indeed, to a large extent American colonial society was made up of disinherited younger sons, displaced workers like the Scotch-Irish weavers, or in the case of the Washingtons, a clergyman driven out of his parish by the Puritans — people unusually sensitive to abuses of power. Yet, though it always had an expanding edge, an escape valve of frontier opportunity, it was also a stable society. The American Revolution was brought on by fear of official intent to end their *de facto* freedom from all government except the local: the arrival of troops, of taxes, of new courts to regulate trade, of a host of placemen fresh from Britain to fill public offices Americans had and could fill ably, and the fear of the imposition of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. It was these signs which motivated American communities to resist, ultimately to the point of war. What they were resisting, as the list of indictments in the Declaration of Independence makes clear, was too much and too unresponsive government.

This is not to downplay the importance of ideology. The structure of ideas in people's heads, usually inherited (except in diseased ages like our own when ideologies are taken up and put off like fashions), control their perception of events. The Country Ideology taught Americans to fear government, the Court Party, as potentially oppressive. This was populism. The Americans were not a revolting proletariat seeking to reinvent society but the people of a region of the British Empire seeking to defend themselves. Not until the 19th century did some thinkers provide an abstract European view of the Declaration of Independence as a revolutionary program. This can only be done by filtering it ahistorically back and forth through the French Revolution and German transcendentalism,

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which becomes as much a threat to the self-government and good sense of communities as what was overthrown.

The populist instinct can be seen in the entire colonial period during more than a century and a half. There were, among the relative handful of Americans living on the edge of a wilderness, threatened by savages and hostile European powers, literally dozens of "rebellions" and "revolts." No colony escaped them. A few of these were palace revolutions, factional disputes and slave uprisings. Most of them, however, represent real populism — uprisings of the community of certain regions against official abuses. Class warfare was never raised and the legitimacy of proprietary or royal rule was never disputed. Bad officials were simply removed or thwarted by popular action. As one historian has written: "18th-century uprisings were in some important ways different from those of today . . . not all 18th century mobs simply defied the law; some used extralegal means to implement official demands or to enforce laws not otherwise enforceable, others in effect extended the law in urgent situations beyond its technical limits. Since leading eighteenth-century Americans had known many occasions on which mobs took on the defense of the public welfare, which was, after all, the stated purpose of government, they were less likely to deny popular upheavals all legitimacy than are modern leaders. . . they could still grant such incidents an established and necessary role in free societies. . . These attitudes. . . shaped political events of the Revolutionary era . . ."[1]

British officials complained constantly that Americans were "accustomed to live without law or gospel," and sought to bring "chaos into form" and to reduce "Anarchy into regular Government."[2] But Americans did not live without law. There was no anarchy — there was simply less obedience than English officials were accustomed to receive. The colonial revolts used to be well-known and celebrated in American history. Perhaps the fact they are nearly forgotten says something about the heavy weight of authority today. Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia; the 1689 revolution in Maryland; the successful 1635-1638 resistance of the Massachusetts Bay colony against attempts to revoke its charter; Leisler's 1688 rebellion in New York; Culpeper's 1677-1680 rebellion in North Carolina; the ejection of the proprietary government from South Carolina in 1721; the colonists'

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1. Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America," reprinted in James Morton Smith, ed., *Politics and Society in American History, 1607-1865* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), Vol. 1, p. 102.

2. Francis B. Simkins and Charles P. Roland, *A History of the South*, 4th edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 49.

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reform of the proprietary regime in Georgia in the 1740's; the revolt of the frontier Paxton boys in Pennsylvania in 1763, which led a reluctant government to adopt new Indian policies and expand the franchise; the Regulator movements in the two Carolinas just before the Revolution. There were many more. Left historians have strained hard to find proletarian revolt, but without success. All these actions were *populist*: defensive uprisings of regional communities against sins of omission or commission on the part of officials. And all had a degree of success.

To characterize a few of the most important: Bacon's rebellion in Virginia in 1675 came after the royal governor failed to call elections for 15 years and failed to authorize action against the Indians demanded by the settlers furthest west. Bacon organized his neighbors in the teeth of the governor's authority and put down the Indians. When the governor declared him an outlaw, he ejected the governor from the capital. The matter ended more or less when Bacon died suddenly and his forces dispersed. This was not a proletarian social revolution but a disciplining of official abuses by the people.

Even more interesting, perhaps, is the end of proprietary rule in South Carolina. There was a serious Indian war in 1715, which the settlers themselves won without help from their Lords Proprietors. When the proprietors' agents pushed trade restrictions, the collection of quitrents, and attempted to control for themselves the lands that had been acquired in the Yemassee War, the militia simply gathered and threw out the proprietary agents, leaving the elected part of the government in place. The *de facto* regime was quietly recognized by the Crown. Then there was Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain boys of Vermont, who forced New York, New Hampshire, and the Congress to recognize them as a separate state, and the "State of Franklin" in Tennessee, which though abortive, forced North Carolina and the Congress to confirm the land policies it advocated.

Of course, these assertions of popular power seem remote, but they are important for understanding the populist instincts of the American people. Such assertions of regional popular power against bad government continued into the new Union. Consider the Whiskey Rebellion, the outcome of the machinations of that evil genius Alexander Hamilton. Among many other measures designed to profit the rich and organized at the expense of the ordinary and unorganized, Hamilton put through a distillery tax. The tax was not really needed. Its purpose was to lay the heavy hand of the government on the most undisciplined part of the people and make them like it. It bore very unevenly, contrary to the spirit if not the

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letter of the Constitution, on the westward regions where, because of transportation problems, it was convenient to turn much surplus agricultural produce into whiskey for easier shipment.

It was an enormity, a gratuitous act of power very much like busing in a later time. Nobody likes it, except the ruling elite who do not participate in it. The regions affected by the whiskey tax understood perfectly what was afoot. No one could be found to enforce and prosecute except outside appointees — the same practice Americans not long before had conducted a successful war against. But what is most interesting is the contrast between the official story that has dominated the accounts of establishment historians since the time, and what actually happened, which was, indeed, a populist triumph. According to the official account, a riotous revolt against just federal law broke out in the backwoods of Pennsylvania. President Washington sent out the army, dispersed the mobs and upheld the majesty of the government. According to John Marshall's biography of Washington and other Federalist accounts, the new Union was thus saved from anarchy and impotent government.

Here is what actually happened. The people in the affected areas simply refused to pay the tax. This was true everywhere from Pennsylvania to Georgia, and their public officials backed them. In Western Pennsylvania, a few of the tax agents were roughed up slightly, had their horses' tails cropped or were doused with molasses, reminiscent of protests against British taxation. There was no serious violence, but it gave Hamilton the opportunity to send armed marshals out to harass the people. The state of Pennsylvania called out the militia to defend itself from the federal gunslingers. There was an altercation in which two protesters and one federal marshal were killed. This was the pretext for Hamilton and Secretary of War Knox to send in troops — something vigorously opposed by the Virginians in the Cabinet, Jefferson and Edmund Randolph. The governor and the chief justice of Pennsylvania protested that the government was in violation of the Constitution, since such invasions could only be mounted at the call of the state, to suppress rebellion or repel invasion. The state had not called and there was no rebellion and no invasion except by the federal government.

Hamilton mobilized the whole army, 13,000 men, and marched them into Western Pennsylvania. They stayed a few weeks. Nothing happened. People waved politely from the fields as the soldiers marched by, the tax was paid quietly where the troops were, it still went uncollected everywhere else. The troops left and the tax ceased being paid. It was never

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paid again anywhere, and when Jefferson and his friends got into office in 1801 it was not only repealed but refunded. Meanwhile, Hamilton's official errand boys got warrants issued for "treason," against 150 citizens of western Pennsylvania — an extremely dubious constitutional proceeding. The grand jury dismissed two-thirds of the indictments immediately. Thirty-one people were brought to trial. The juries, against high-handed efforts by the federal judges to secure convictions, found not guilty in all but two cases. The two convictions were of a notorious drunk and a moron, men who obviously were not guilty of treasonable intent and who were later pardoned.

Thus ended perhaps the greatest populist triumph in American history, though it was subsequently reinterpreted to make the government oppressors look good. Whether this could happen now, given the federal establishment's near monopoly of heavy firepower, remains to be seen. There are some similarities, but a much more sinister scenario to the recent government massacre of women and children in Waco. Suppose the authorities of Texas had declined to go along with the federal invasion. Suppose the citizens to be suppressed had been more numerous or less odd.Would there have been a different outcome? In the court proceedings the judge was clearly partisan, as in the Whiskey Rebellion, yet the juries released many of the defendants. Will American populism have to take some such course in future against entrenched and recalcitrant power that controls the courts, the communication media, and the police? Will the holders of power and privilege yield to persuasion and sentiment and political dialogue?

Populism is still deeply ingrained in the American character, though it grows more diluted with each passing decade. It is always faced with John Taylor's dilemma, which means its successes will always be temporary and limited. If one bad agenda and establishment are defeated, there will always be others waiting in the wings to manipulate the state. This is an eternal dilemma of popular government, Such a dilemma is, of course, infinitely preferable to those presented by any other kind of government.

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Lost Opportunity: African-American Populism

Leslie Wilson

Although "populism" is a familiar term, it is also a very confused one. Despite the fact there have been populist politics from the Revolutionary period to the present, most people have not accepted its leaders as representatives of either agrarian or social reform. [1] Similarly, while populism and African-Americans are not usually associated, blacks have always supported a "populist style." Men such as Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, Booker T. Washington, and Martin Luther King, Jr. always favored the community over the state. Today blacks continue to support populist oriented leaders such as Jesse Jackson, but few of them would characterize these and other leaders as populists.[2]

The flirtation of African-Americans with populism began with the Grange and the Colored Farmers National Alliance in the late 1880s and came to a bitter end with the presidential election of 1896. During that span, the initial movement was segregated, but whites supported the need to unite with black farmers. As a result, African-Americans joined white farmers to address their joint concerns. This movement developed in Texas during 1886 and expanded nationally two years later. Yet, even at the very beginning, the Colored Farmers National Alliance relied on the support of whites, most of whom served in cooperative exchanges.[3] By

1. Kazin argues that populist politics have existed since 1776 and have evolved from voicing the dreams and discontents of those on the Left to more recently representing groups on the Right. See Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

2. See Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), pp. 92-114; and Christopher Lasch, *The True And Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), p. 217.

3. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 18-124.

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1891, its growth was phenomenal. It evolved as the largest black group of its time, claiming more than a million members in twelve states.[4]

Suddenly, the African-American vote became sought by both Democrats and Republicans. The national Populist Party courted the black vote and changed the democratic process. Some black populists were elected between 1892 and 1896, but by 1896 the fear of fusion between whites and blacks as well as between Populists and Democrats, encouraged Republicans and Democrats alike to discourage agrarian unity and to support measures that would disenfranchise black voters. Within months, the Populist Party was destroyed, blacks became second class citizens, white farmers were marginalized, and the remnants of populism were incorporated into progressivism.[5]

The Colored Farmers Alliance was threatened by both white Bourbons and black Republicans. As a result, the more visible theme — the inability to achieve a lasting coalition between the races and the ensuing racial backlash — overshadows the magnitude of the Alliance and its success in bringing black farmers together. Even careful scholars such as Lawrence Goodwyn tend to ignore the impact of blacks in the transformation of the south. Today, in order to reevaluate the relation between African-Americans and populism it is necessary to ask new questions. Is populism to be understood as an organized political movement or merely as self-help, local autonomy and community development? Was American populism generated by the lack of viable political parties during the period Goodwyn defines as *The Populist Moment,* and was its failure due to the resurfacing of the Democratic Party? Was it the artificial environment created by Reconstruction that encouraged the development of reform and reactionary movements? Did African-American involvement with populism continue after 1896? Apparently it did, but in different forms and directions. African-American populism did not die out with the Colored Farmers Alliance. What survived is an idiosyncratic brand of "African-American" populism with its own particular history. Unlike "mainstream" populism, which was already predominant even before the revolutionary period, an African-American variant emerged only in the late 18th century, with the development of autonomous institutions. If populism is understood as democracy, economic cooperation and community

4. John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1988), p. 233.

5. See Mary Beth Norton, David Katzman, Paul Escott *et al.*, *A People and a Nation*, Vol. II (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1990), pp. 597-599.

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development, then it did develop and thrive with the black church.[6] During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when blacks could not freely gather and were often the victims of racial violence, the church became the focal point of the community: it became a constant presence offering a meeting place, a shelter from foes and often the training ground for activists.

If the church, which remains the heart of the black community even today, held the key to reform and radicalism, it must have had a crucial role in the successes and failures of both southern and northern populism. The history of St. Philip's Church in New York City provides an excellent example of this trajectory. Organized by colored Episcopalians between 1809 and 1820 after they ran into discriminatory treatment at Trinity Church, it became the nation's second black Episcopal congregation.[7] Led by Peter Williams, Jr., whose father had organized New York's first black Methodist congregation, St. Philip's opened its doors July 3, 1819.[8]

A prominent figure among New York abolitionists, Williams was heavily influenced by his father, who was once owned by the John Street Methodist Church. The elder's liberation was multifaceted. He was both manumitted from slavery and separated from white dominated religion. But it was not a clean break. Williams served John Street Methodist as a sexton for several years after securing his freedom. Meanwhile, his quest for self-determination led to the enrollment of his son in the African Free School, the co-founding of a benevolent society and eventually the formation and acceptance of the pastorate of the African Methodist Zion Church.

The blossoming of black New York placed St. Philip's in the forefront of the struggle for equality and freedom. Located in the heart of the black community on Centre Street, it was a "neat brick building, . . . capable of holding two thousand people."[9] With a congregation that included a "who's who" of black New Yorkers, by the eve of the Civil War St. Philip's had become a symbol, if not the center, of the local black community. Supported by 350 regular members, it easily ranked as the city's best colored church and cast a long shadow over its contemporaries, which included Abyssinian Baptist, Zion Baptist, Union, Bethel, First Colored

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6. Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven*, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-220.

7. See *Reaching Out: An Epic of the People of St. Philip's Church* (Tappan: Custombook, 1986). The first black church in the North was St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Philadephia, founded by black Methodists such as Richard Allen and Absalom Jones.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

9. Charles B. Ray, "Black Churches In New York City, 1840," in Milton C. Sernett, ed., *Afro-American Religious History A Documentary Witness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), p. 205.

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Presbyterian, Asbury, St. Matthew's, and Zion Churches.

Rev. Williams bore a considerable burden. Although Charles B. Ray, the editor of *Colored American* described him as "meek," he was an outspoken advocate for abolition, equality and education. When challenged by Bishop Onderdonk of the Episcopal diocese to denounce abolition in favor of colonization or resign his pastorate, he chose the latter. To the extent that they enjoyed considerable local self-determination, however, his parishioners refused to accept his resignation and forced his reinstatement. African-Americans were attempting to become their own masters and there was no reliance on the government, white friends or the Episcopal diocese. Although they worked within the confines of the organized church, they certainly were autonomous.

St. Philip's second, third, and fourth rectors were embroiled in constant confrontation with the mainstream thinking of the Episcopal dioceses. Each future priest attended and later worked in parishes that had split with the Anglican Church to achieve greater community autonomy. Their elevation to the rectorship reflects St. Philip's vestry's position of leadership in the community. This history of struggle was a key factor in the selection of black Episcopal clergymen, as was the need to include non-northern born leaders.[10] From 1819 to 1886, the members of St. Philip's were pillars of the community. The membership devoted its attentions to abolition and the development of benevolent societies, schools and interracial forums. Their financial contributions and their energy supported the American Anti-Slavery Society, the New York Manumission Society and the Underground Railroad. On Independence Day 1834 an interracial meeting at the Chatam Street Chapel, supported by St. Philip's and the Tappan brothers, led white workers to attack the audience and the black community. The rioters eventually reached St. Philip's, where they spent two hours vandalizing the church.[11] The alleged culprits of the

10. Rev. William Johnson Alston (May 14, 1872-May 26-1874), hailed from Warrenton, North Carolina. Educated at Oberlin University and Kenyon College, he joined the staff of St. Philip's in 1859, but left a year later to become the rector of St. Thomas in Philadelphia. In 1872 Alston returned to New York to lead his former parish. Before accepting the helm of St. Philip's, a Caribbean native, the Rev. Joseph Sandford Atwell (February 9, 1875-October 8, 1881) served as rector of St. Stephen's Church in Savannah, Georgia. His successor, Hutchens Chew Bishop (1886-April 1, 1933), grew up in St. James' Church, an institution his parents helped to establish in his native Baltimore. Following his ordination he was the assistant at Baltimore's Chapel of St. Mary, founded by a group which included his siblings, and then worked for ten years as the head of St. Mark's Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

11. Roi Ottley and William Weatherby, *The Negro in New York* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1967), p. 102.

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anti-abolition fever, or at least those who were arrested, were artisans, tradesmen, journeymen and at least one union member. According to Sean Wilentz, most workers had a deep distrust of the small unskilled black community.[12] Considering them lazy and dependents of the state, they made blacks the targets of their jokes as well as their anger. Union men often attended insulting Jim Crow and Zip Coon minstrel shows at the Bowery Theater, and Tammany Hall portrayed abolitionist efforts as attempts to destroy the Constitution. At that time it was obvious that black populism could not enter a coalition with white workers.

Twenty years later, little had changed. During the 1863 Draft Riots, St. Philip's was ransacked once again. Because of the church's proximity to the police station, however, the militia was able to save it. Yet the soldiers had little regard for this house of worship and turned it into barracks. By the time the uprising had been put down, there was nearly three thousand dollars worth of damage. Another victim was the Colored Orphan Asylum, a facility heavily supported by the church and its vestryman, Dr. James McCune Smith. Some of its defenseless black children were lynched and others were chased down 42nd Street into the East River.

Each time, St. Philip's rebuilt itself. As the African-American community slowly progressed northward through Manhattan, the church also relocated. At the beginning of the 20th century, St. Philip's and its counterpart, the Abyssinian Baptist Church, were the first black churches in Harlem. To ensure fair treatment for its congregation, St. Philip's entered the real estate and banking businesses. By the end of the 19th century, St. Philip's had become less political but no less involved in community affairs. A quiet evolution of the church and its vestry was taking place. The gains of the Civil War and Reconstruction had opened up new opportunities. The development of the Republican Party as a national organization and the emergence of the Democrats in local affairs encouraged a break with old allies and a search for new ones.

After 1896, the black community denounced organized political institutions as well as populist-style politics. As populist ideas moved northward and were integrated in the progressive movement, populism became nationalized. As a group, however, southern African-Americans did not transpose their populist experience to other regions of the country. From the late 1880s to the years following WWI, blacks fled the South for greater opportunities elsewhere in the US. Most of them went North. The

12. Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 263-64.

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resulting increase of migrants in the 1890s contributed to the decline of populism and the rise of racial segregation. As southerners joined a smaller number of earlier settlers and Caribbean immigrants in the North, they had a great opportunity to transmit populist culture to developing urban communities. Yet nothing of the kind took place. Though the majority of the community, southerners were forced to adapt to the new culture. This socialization was carried out by the church, the NAACP, the Urban League, and protectors of original settler societies (clubs, organizations, etc.). Churches and institutions such as the NAACP and National Urban League eased the transition and acclimatized the newcomers to the faster pace. While the NAACP provided legal support in public facilities and school segregation cases, the Urban League helped individuals find satisfactory housing, employment and medical care.

Migration, however, was not a godsend. Regardless of previous social status, poor blacks were forced into the service industry. No common ground developed between the races and, generally, whites refused to work with or alongside African-Americans. Overall, northern labor rejected black workers. Few unions had black members and most African-Americans who managed to enter the trades did so only as scabs. The progressives simply excluded blacks and their concerns.

While accepting multiracial coalitions such as the NAACP, moderate northern black leaders rejected populism. Groups such as the National Urban League feared the migration of southerners and secretly sought to stem the increasing waves of new arrivals. The best example of a black populist of this era, Booker T. Washington, functioned best in the south and had little to contribute to the northern dialogue. Lacking his economic resources and charisma, his northern colleagues learned that their attempts to promote community determination went nowhere. T. Thomas Fortune, the originator of many of Washinton's ideas, could not overcome personal depression or the weight of Washington himself; W.E.B. DuBois lost creditability as his politics leaned toward socialism; the nationalist newspaper editor, William Monroe Trotter, was branded a separatist; A. Philip Randolph's base never progressed beyond trade unionism; and, despite a wonderful idea of community economics, Marcus Garvey was seen as a threat and deported.

Thus populist ideas became relegated to the ministry. But between 1896 and 1930 ministers were not yet the main black leaders they became later. In New York's largest black congregations, Hutchens Chew Bishop and Adam Clayton Powell, Sr. could have taken on such a role, but neither

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chose to do so. Their sons, both of whom inherited the task of saving their churches and Harlem, did not take over before 1933. Along with their counterparts across the nation, Bishop and Powell focused primarily on the problems of their urban neighborhoods. As a result, there was no black political unity until the Depression, when problems had already become unmanageable. Trapped in gerrymandered ghettos, usually represented by paternalistic whites, community control could only go so far. Even following the election of Oscar DePriest as alderman and later congressman for Chicago, few blacks were elected to serve their communities.

The linkage between African-Americans and populism was severed until the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. Prevailing political conditions did not facilitate the formation of broad coalitions necessary for populist politics. During that time, progressivism addressed mainly the needs of urbanites and their suburban counterparts. By the Depression, rural concerns took a back seat to the economic problems of the growing urban metropolis. Despite the expansion of democracy and the impact of socialist and communist ideas, racial unity failed to materialize. The Democrats sought separation and disfranchisement, while the Republicans refused to challenge them. As a result, interracial hostility grew. Farmers did not gain sympathy from the workers or visa versa, and from wages to attitudes, differences between members of different races became more pronounced. Although white farmers were helped by Depression-era legislation, more blacks in the south sank deeper into peonage.

The 1896 legacy simply faded away. Like the New York riots of 1834 and 1863, the parties that needed to come together found themselves fighting each other. In the same way that poor whites and unionists attacked and burned St. Philip's, the fusionists and white populists turned their backs on black farmers. Along with abolitionism, populism was a brief glimpse of what democracy could become. Although that light has flickered several times since, it has never maintained a steady flame. Unless the emphasis goes back to the primacy of post-racial organic communities predicated on territoriality and that personal interaction necessary to sustain visible and ever-developing racially and ethnically heterogeneous culture, prospects for the 21st century will be bleak.

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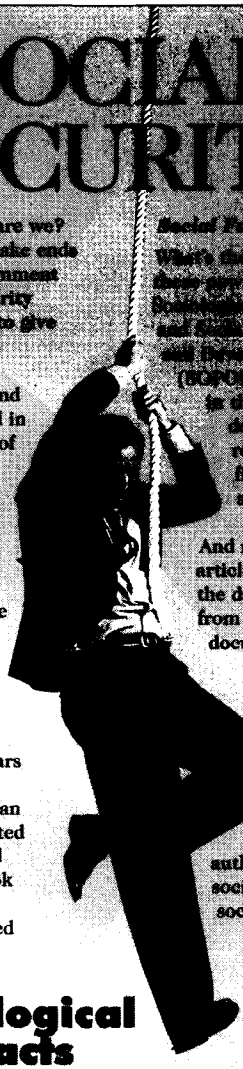

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Islamic Populism

Kaveh L. Afrasiabi

> What Enlightenment declares to be an error and a fiction is the very same thing as Enlightenment . . .
> — Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*

Discussions of Islamic revival, fanaticism, fundamentalism, populism, etc., reverberate in the literature concerning the Muslim world. There is resistance to all forms of *un*Islamic (especially Western) ideas and modes of behavior. To be sure, there are various "Islams" — ranging from militant Shiism in Iran and Lebanon to the Sunni brotherhood *(Ikhwan)* in Egypt and other parts of North Africa — each fashioning and refashioning the "venerable tradition" against the tendency of local intelligentsia and ruling governments to imitate the West.[1] At times the target is what Al-e Ahmad calls "Westoxicated intellectuals," the colonial legacy and, occasionally, as with Iqbal, Abduh, Shariati and other apostles of Islamic "modernism," is self-directed. Yet there is a common thread. These Islamic movements are not inherently backward-looking or conservative, seeking primarily to restore premodern values or to legitimate particular interests.[2] Nor are they the legitimate postmodern heirs of largely bankrupt secular movements

1. Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993). See also William R. Roff, "Islamic Movements: One or Many?" In Roff, ed., *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 31-52.

2. Daryush Shayegan, *Qu'est-ce qu'une Revolution Religieuse?* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1991). See also Michael Youssef, *Revolt Against Modernity* (The Hague: E. J. Brill, 1985).

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and ideologies.[3] Similarly, facile associations of Islamic populism with empowerment "from below" need re-examination.[4] All in all, these movements, first and foremost the Islamic revolution in Iran, have sparked new suspicions about the universality of Western Enlightenment.[5]

The Iranian revolution's linking of nation and religion contradicts Max Weber's verdict on modernity. Instead of formal-value rationality and the concomitant gradual decomposition of religious worldviews, what has developed is a kind of "hierocratic domination" — the sobering, strange courtship of the holy by a modern bureaucracy. Coming to terms with this revolution requires deciphering a "heroic" society engaged in recreating itself on the basis of a social imaginary drawn from tradition.[6] Although this process is far from over, it is clearly a watershed and it has profoundly shaken the predominant paradigms of progress. With its overt anti-secularism, its identification of politics and religion and its relentless quest for the Islamization of all features of social life, the Islamic revolution is a threat to the ideologists of progress inasmuch as it threatens their belief in the march of history and in time-honored distinctions such as progressive/reactionary, radical/conservative.[7]

At any rate, the crisis precipitated by what has been described as the

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3. W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Fundamentalism and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1985). Also, Ernest Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1992); Akbar S. Ahmad and Hastings Donnan, eds., *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1994).

4. See, e.g., Edmund Burke III, *Global Crises and Social Movements: Artisans, Peasants, Populists and the World Economy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988); Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991); Ali A. Cudsi and Ali E. Hillal Desouki, eds., *Islam and Power* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); Mohammad Ayoob, ed., *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion* (New York: Praeger, 1982).

5. For a work that traces Islamic movements to Western culture's stance toward the East, see Ali Mazrui, *Cultural Forces in World Politics* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1990). Despite its insights, this work is hampered by a holistic notion of "the West" and an uncritical understanding of Islamic cultural forces.

6. On the concept of "heroic society," see Alsdair McIntyre, *After Virtue* (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1981).

7. While conceding that Islamic fundamentalism "is very hard to reconcile with liberalism," Fukuyama holds on to his teleological account by reducing the Iranian revolution to a pathological development — a temporary throwback from the general evolutionary pattern. See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 217. Similarly, a former CIA analyst of Islamic movements has recently projected (under a pseudonym) the impending demise of these movements and the imminent "meltdown" of the Islamic Republic. See Edward G. Shirley, "Is Iran's Present Algeria's Future?" in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (May-June, 1995).

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"revenge of God" is undeniable.[8] Yet none of the "facts" of this revolution are self-evident,[9] and it is premature to conclude the revolution has midwifed an "anti-secular" state pure and simple.[10] The contraposition of Islam and secularism, long a staple of sociological literature, does not seem tenable in light of recent post-revolutionary developments.[11] The turbulent post-1979 state-building process has had problematic consequences for both religion and politics. The Islamic Republic has established a kind of institutional heteronomy and linked it to two largely incompatible forms of power, republicanism and theocracy, through a populist imaginary that constantly reproduces its initial *élan* while simultaneously nurturing a secular undercurrent impossible to describe as "theocratic populism" — an article of faith in analyses of Iran.

Islamic Populism Revisited

Today, the concept of Islamic populism, whether in conjunction with or juxtaposed to "fundamentalism," is used to describe the plethora of disparate religious movements in the Middle East and beyond engaged in

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8. Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World*, trans. by Alan Braley (Philadelphia: Pensylvania State University Press, 1994). See also Martin G. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *The Glory and the Power: The Fundamentalist Challenge to the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992). Both these works are theoretically weak and, consequently, unable to grasp many of the complexities of the fundamentalist "phenomenon."

9. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). Although Arjomand is on the mark when he questions the distinction between revolutions and counterrevolutions, his analysis falls short in that he reduces the revolution's ideological repertoire to the religious leaders' outlook (e.g., p. 200), uncritically uses terms such as "ideology," and confuses revolutionary practices with subversive religious critiques. A similar reductionism can be found in Moadel, who writes that the revolution "transpired when the revolutionary ideology began to take over the protest movements" and that it "was over when the Shiite revolutionary discourse was reduced to the ideology of the Islamic Republic." Mansour Moadel, *Class, Politics, and Ideology in the Iranian Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 191, 268.

10. See Theda Skocpol, "Reconsidering the French Revolution in World-Historical Perspective," *Social Research*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Spring 1989), p. 69: "The Iranian revolution . . . has opposed a secular, 'modernizing' absolutist monarchy in the name of an Islamic theocratic regime. Iran's revolutionary political culture is a militantly anti-secularist and anti-modernizing version of Shia Islam."

11. According to Gellner, "The secularization thesis does not apply to Islam." Gellner, *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity, op. cit.*, p. xi. See also Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988). Both authors overlook "internal secularization" and thus are forced to dichotomize Islam and secularism. For a summary of recent discussions on the subject, see José Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

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mobilization, organization, and possibly (as in the case of Iran) ruling in the name of *Allah*. Populism has been deployed to explain the secrets behind Khomeini's charisma, the revolution's successful mobilization, its glorification of the have-nots, its transversal constituency, its seemingly paranoic "xenophobia" and its nostalgia for an idealized past. With these features as earmarks of populism, the Iranian revolution has been lumped, explicitly or implicitly, with other populist experiences such as Peronism and Narodnism. Beyond the common references, however, considerable confusion remains over the concept of populism.[12]

Almost all accounts of the Iranian revolution have relied uncritically on the existing literature on populism — especially Latin American populism.[13] This *ad hoc* use of the concept tends to confuse more than it clarifies, particularly because theories of populism were originally developed to explain events outside the Middle East.[14] Thus Afrashteh defines populism as "institutionalized xenophobia" — a one-sided, psychologically reductionist assumption,[15] and Moghadam uses populism simply as a class concept.[16] Consequently, the religious component of this populism becomes an extension of class and the strategies of Iranian populists are reduced to "class behavior." As to the question "why Islam?" the standard

12. See Ervand Abrahamian, *Khominism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993); Manouchehr Dorraj, *From Zarathustra to Khomeini: Populism and Dissent in Iran* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 1990); Paul Vielle and F. Khosrokhavar, *Le Discours Populaire de la Revolution Iranienne* (Paris: Contemporaneité, 1990); Fred Halliday, "The Iranian Revolution: Uneven Development and Religious Populism," in *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 36, no. 2 (Fall-Winter, 1982); Kambiz Afrashteh, "The Predominance and Dilemmas of Theocratic Populism in Contemporary Iran," in *Iranian Studies, Vol.* XIV, Nos. 3-4 (Summer-Autumn, 1981).

13. Thus Abrahamian simply equates Iranian and Latin American populisms (as modern expressions of mass discontent). Yet he undercuts his own effort (of deconstructing the "paranoid style" in Iranian political culture) by recycling old clichés about foreign domination. See *Khomeinism, op. cit.*, p. 116. On Latin American populisms, see Daniele Checci, *The Emergence of Populist Experiences in Latin America* (Oxford: Queen Elizabeth House, 1993); Emilio de Ipola, *Ideologia y Discurso Populista* (Mexico City: Folios Ediciones, 1982); Anibal Viguera, "Populismo y Neopopulismo en America Latina," in *Revista Mexicana de Scoiologia,* Vol. 55, No. 3 (July-September 1993), pp. 49-66. See also Guilermo A. O'Deonnel, "Delegative Democracy?" in *Working Papers*, No. 172 (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, Kellogg Institute, 1993).

14. Bashirieh writes about "populist mobilization" in Iran without, however, clarifying what he means by "populism." See Hossein Bashirieh, *The State and Revolution in Iran* (Sidney: Croom Helm, 1984).

15. Afrashteh, "The Predominance and Dilemmas . . ." *op. cit.*

16. Val Moghadam, "Islamic Populism, Class and Gender in Post Revolutionary Iran," in John Foran, ed., *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 189-223.

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answer has been formulated in terms of "lack of other alternatives."[17]

The emphasis here is on Islam's organizational rather than ideological role. It is meant as a corrective to the so-called "authenticity" argument, which traces the roots of "political Islam" to the Muslims' attempt to regain their lost authenticity (*asl*).[18] Although there is no denying the importance of cultural alienation and the need for roots, the "authenticity" argument overlooks the impact of factors unrelated to religion.[19] In contrast, typical sociologistic explanations invert the authenticity argument by claiming that Islam's role was not a cause but an effect of the revolutionary process, which they commonly describe as populist.[20] Here, the specificity of Iranian populism is defined as broadly representing the middle classes, with one group interpreting the phenomenon as traditional and fascist,[21]

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17. "Sociologically, given the lack of established roots for alternative political ideas in society, there existed an intimate and active relationship, both sentimental and ideological, between religion and the masses." Mohsen Nodjomi, "From Popular Revolution to Theocratic Absolutism: Iran 1979-1981," in *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 1988), p. 38. Accordingly, Asharaf and Banuazizi write, "In the absence of genuine political parties, independent labor unions and professional associations, and freedoms of speech and assembly, religion became the only rallying point around which a mass movement could be built." See Ahmad Ashraf and Ali Banuazizi, "The State, Classes, and Modes of Mobilization in the Iranian Revolution," in *State, Culture and Society*, No. 1 (1985), p. 9. These authors have developed a stage theory of the Iranian Revolution. Accordingly, there are five stages, "each marked by a particular mode of mobilization, dominated by a particular coalition of opposition groups, and distinguished by a particular set of confrontational strategies." p. 4. But these are too many variables. Consequently, the revolution's chronology has been forced to fit this neat categorization so that, e.g., the squatters' riots in Teheran in 1977 are simply ignored because they do not conform with the "nonviolent mobilization" of the first stage. In addition, the authors fail to document their claims as to the frequency of collective action.

18. See Hamid Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution* (London: Islamic Society, 1982). According to Algar, the revolution "was also a question of an individual returning to the self, to the deepest self." p. 118. The authenticity fever has also caught on with some leading Arab intellectuals who argue that, e.g., the "illusion of cutting ourselves off from our past was definitely refuted by the Iranian Revolution. There is no progress without holding to our authenticity." Quoted in Emmanuel Sivan, ed., *Radical Islam* (New Haven: Yale Univeristy Press, 1985), p. 167. For a critique of this approach, see Paul Piccone, "The Actuality of Tradition," *Telos* 94 (Winter 1993-94), pp. 89-102.

19. See Mongol Bayat, "Islam in Pahlavi and Post-Pahlavi Iran: A Cultural Revolution?" in John L. Esposito, ed., *Islam and Development* (New York: SUNY, 1980).

20. See Michael Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982): "The causes of the revolution, and its timing, were economic and political; the form of the revolution, and its pacing, owed much to the tradition of religious protest."

21. For a typical "Third World fascism" analysis, see Mansour Moadel, *Class, Ideology, and Politics . . ., op. cit.* ; see also, Homa Omid, *Islam, and the Post-Revolutionary State in Iran* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

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and another seeing it as a modernist prototype for socialism.[22] Both interpretations are predicated on a materialism that separates the revolution's form and content — a dualism that explains the remarkable resurgence of the *ulama* and how the popular association of revolution with Islam is more a symptom than a cause of political dissent. Both accounts deduce the revolution from the lack of democracy, of an organized proletariat, class consciousness, etc. Allegedly, because of their relative immunity from repression, the *ulama* were the only social group able to voice popular grievances with impunity. This assumes that the secular forces, had they not been demolished, could have stolen the torch from the clergy — a highly dubious assumption.

Accounts predicated on the "lack of secular ideologies" underestimate the power of religion and assume the superiority of secular ideologies. Usually, they are accompanied by the additional claim that Islam "cemented" a historical bloc of opposing forces. Thus, allegedly, the Iranian masses first became revolutionary and then were "Islamicized." This assumes a pre-ideological phase of mobilization — an easily refutable notion of the possibility of carrying out a revolution without ideology.[23] In addition to an analysis of religion that does not reduce it to merely communicating pre-existing meanings,[24] what is missing here is a serious inquiry into the nature of the revolutionary process as a need-generating mechanism rather than a neutral

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22. Some Iranian leftists, such as the leader of the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party, opportunistically identified Khomeini's version of Islam with "scientific socialism." See "Interview With Kianoori," *International Herald Tribune* (January 23, 1979). Prior to the revolution the entire Iranian Left had advocated the Marxian thesis of the "withering away of religion." After the revolution, references about the *ulama* as a "dying class" vanished, but Iranian leftists still reduced the role of Islam to semantics and continued to see the Islamic revival as temporary and "transitional."

23. This is the main problem with Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978). Subsequently Skocpol corrected this shortcoming, but only by deploying a crude notion of ideology. See her "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution," in *Theory and Society,* Vol. 11, No. 3 (May 1982). Smith has pointed out that "the decentering of class struggle is only an initial step in the development of a more useful political analysis of these movements." Anne Marie Smith, "Rastafari as Resistance and the Ambiguities of Essentialism," in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, eds., *The Making of Political Identities* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 172.

24. The problem with the stereotypical usages of "religious language" is that they imply another (public) language existing side by side it, as if each were an individual linguistic totality closed off from the other. See, e.g., Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988). For an alternative view, see Hans Georg Gadamer, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschafen* (Frankfurt: Surkamp, 1971); and Nancy Bonvillain, *Language, Culture, Communication: The Meaning of Messages* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993).

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channel for pre-existing needs and discontents.[25]

Another interesting perspective on Islamic populism focuses on the "dual society." According to Tehranian, there were "two epistemic societies" predicated on religious and secular ideologies, and the resulting frictions generated by their interaction led to the revolution.[26] Keddie has emphasized the persistence of religious values among the educated sons and daughters of traditional bazaar families, tracing this to these values' ability to stimulate demands and to provide solutions for the problems facing these strata.[27] As a corollary, the "identity crisis" linked to the "dual society" is typically traced to the relative inadequacy of secular values due to their "lack of foundation in the Muslim world because as individual norms they are structurally inappropriate to a non-industrial society."[28]

The first objection here has to do with whether Islamic populism is simply a function of a particular stage of social development or a consequence of distinct processes. The theory implies the questionable assumption that eventually the need for Islamic "revival" is likely to diminish. Aside from its dubious implicit teleology, this view conflates two distinct levels of analysis: (a) the social milieu which generated this populism, and (b) the specific actions, tactics, and strategies of the protagonists, which may have triggered the populist "revolt." The advocates of "dual society" have yet to confront this issue. Their assumption of a "lack of fit" between secular norms and a pre-modern society remains too simplistic.

In *Turban for the Crown*, Arjomand repeatedly criticizes secular forces for their "suicidal" compromise with their religious counterparts during the 1978-79 revolution. Yet he does not differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate compromises. There was considerable agreement

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25. Mohsen M. Milani, *The Making of the Iranian Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988). One of the problems of this work is that it has no clue as to how the revolutionary process functioned as a learning process creating its own disciplinary mechanisms.

26. Majid Tehranian, "Communication and Revolution in Iran: The Passing of A Paradigm," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. XIIV, Nos. 1-4 (1980), p. 7: "The increasing dualist structure of Iran's social and economic systems revealed itself perhaps above all in the communication system. We can best examine the salient features of this dualism in terms of the two competing religious and secular ideologies, structures, and processes of social communication — living autonomously side by side with immense friction whenever and whereever they collided."

27. Nikki R. Keddie, "Iran: Change in Islam: Islam and Change," in *International Journal of the Middle East Studies* Vol. 11, no. 4 (June-July 1980), pp. 527-547.

28. Bassam Tibi, "The Renewed Role of Islam in the Political and Social Development of the Middle East," in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1983), pp. 3-4. Tibi repeats his (essentially Eurocentric) view in *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990).

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between the secular and the religious forces. Operating within the parameters of an Islamic eschatology that emphasized an otherworldly "ethics of duty" over this-worldly success,[29] Khomeini's critique overlapped with that of secular, liberal, and nationalist critics in at least one important respect: the perceived lack of autonomy from foreign powers. Arjomand and others overlook this state of affairs and, consequently, cannot trace the trajectory of the revolution as a consensus-creating process.[30] Here Foucault's writings constitute a striking exception.

Foucault and the Islamic Revolution

Having observed the revolution first-hand as a correspondent for *Le Monde* and *Corriere della Sera* (Fall 1978), Foucault immediately broke with predominant interpretations of the revolution — especially Marxist ones. While he did not consider the revolution populist, much of what he wrote documents the development of an Iranian populism: "What struck me in Iran is that there is no struggle between different elements. What gives it such beauty, and at the same time such gravity, is that there is only one confrontation: between the entire people and the state threatening it."[31] Following Furet, he distinguished between

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29. "This martyr-producing nation . . . is not afraid of any enemy, power, or conspiracy. Afraid are those whose school of thought is not martyrdom. Victorious is the nation for whom martyrdom is prosperity." Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, *Sahifeh-e Noor*, Vol. 13 (Teheran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1983), p. 65. Crucial here is the Islamists' rationalization of death, as basically a non-problematic passage from one realm of being to another. According to Ayatollah Taleghani, who was the foremost popular cleric after Khomeini, Islam has disclosed the secret of death, i.e., that "there is no death; it is a transition of one life to another, from the womb of nature to a large, vast, and elevated divine presence, especially the death which is in the path of Allah." Quoted in *Majmoo'eh-e Notghay-e Nemaz-e Jomm'eh-e Teheran*, Vol. 1 (Teheran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, 1985), p. 45.

30. See, Mohammad Amjad, *Iran: From Royal Dictatorship to Theocracy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1989); Gholam R. Afkhami, *The Iranian Revolution: Thanatos On a National Scale* (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1988); and Ali Rahnema and Farhad Nomani, *The Secular Miracle* (London: ZED Press, 1990).

31. See Michel Foucault, "Teheran: La Fede Contro lo Scià," in *Corriere della Sera* (October 8, 1978): Islam does not "constitute an ideology so diffused among the population that it forces the revolutionaries to unite with it for a certain time. The religion is much more than a simple vocabulary through which the aspirations that have no other words must pass." However, Foucault seems to contradict himself when he characterizes religion as "the vocabulary, the ceremonial, the timeless drama into which one could fit the historical drama of a people that pitted its very existence against that of its sovereign." See his "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirits," in Lawrence D. Kritzman, ed., *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984* (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 216.

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revolutionary events and their socio-historical context.[32] His focus on the interplay between movement and power, the self-constitution of revolutionaries, their actions and modes of resistance, as well as their religion, was in tune with his attacks on traditional historiography and his anti-humanism. To a certain extent, the Iranian revolution as a critique of progressivist thought corroborated Foucault's premonitions. Defining the Iranian revolution as "a movement that permits the introduction of the spiritual dimension in political life," he dismissed the label "anti-modern" and argued instead that it is "the most mad and most modern form of revolution" deserving a great deal of intellectual enthusiasm.[33]

Foucault saw it as a fascinating break not only with the old Iranian regime but also with "the entire world order . . . it is perhaps the first insurrection against the global system."[34] Clearly, the Iranian revolution led him to re-examine not only the role of religion but also the problem of revolution as such. The Iranian experience only superficially resembled other revolutions marked by "class struggle" and led by a "vanguard." He saw the revolution's "contingent singularity" as an unprecedented manifestation of a "collective will"[35] embodied in Khomeini.[36] As in Rousseau, for Foucault the collective will denotes the voluntary participation of all. Yet he was not blind to the "dark side" of the Iranian collective will, e.g., its "atrocious" aspects, the "worship of the dead," the "virulent xenophobia,

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32. See François Furet, *La Revolution Française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978). For Foucault, an event "is not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but the reversal of relationship of forces, the usurpation of power . . . the forces operating in history are not controlled by destiny or regulating mechanisms but respond to haphazard conflicts." Quoted in Jean Goldstein, ed., *Foucault and the Writing of History* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1994), pp. 170-171.

33. Foucault complained that the European intellectuals' relative lack of enthusiasm for the Iranian revolution stemmed from their lack of understanding of its historical significance. See "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirits," *op. cit.*, pp. 212-213.

34. Michel Foucault, "Ritorno al Profeta?" in *Corriere della Sera* (October 22, 1978): "It is not a revolution in the literal sense of the term, which is, people getting on their feet and redirecting themselves. It is the insurrection of men with bare hands, who want to lift the formidable weight we all bear, but more particularly weighs on them: 'the weight of the entire world order'." Previously, Foucault had sneered at all liberation movements as "the forms that made an essentially normalizing power acceptable." in *History of Sexuality*, Vol. One (New York: Pantheon, 1981), p. 144.

35. "We met in Teheran and throughout Iran, the collective will of a people. Well, you have to salute it, it does not happen every day." See "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirits," *op. cit.*, p. 215.

36. "Il Mitico Capo della Rivolta," in *Corriere della Sera* (November 26, 1978). Here Foucault portrays Khomeini as a saintly figure opposed to political corruption and Iran's domination from abroad.

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and the "subjugation of women."[37] None of this stifled his appreciation of the novelty of the revolution. His romanticization of the Iranian phenomenon was based both on his observation of the mass demonstrations and the general strike (which crippled the Iranian system for half a year) and his interpretation of where the revolution was going: a "radical rejection of the past" moving "toward a distant luminous point, in which it might be possible to reconnect oneself to a faith rather than to preserve obedience."[38] Contrary to standard analyses, Foucault did not raise the movement over its prospects, and the formation of revolutionary identity over its consequences.[39] The problems with his analysis lie elsewhere.

Foucault's notion of the "collective will" remains too vague. Like Rousseau, he said precious little about the content of this will and what it wills.[40] It collides with his own romanticization of the revolution when voicing skepticism about the revolutionaries' demand for an "Islamic government," which he did not regard as "very reassuring."[41] He was not particularly disturbed by this fundamental ambiguity, nor did he see the collective will's "intolerance" as purely negative, but as "necessary."[42] His inability to provide a coherent analysis is not only related to a vacuous concept of the collective will but also to an equally ill-elaborated distinction between faith and obedience. What are the historical advantages of a regime based on faith? Foucault has no answers. This abstractness prevented him from foreseeing the degeneration of the revolution into

37. "Is it Useless to Revolt?" in *Philosophy and Social Criticism,* Vol. 8 (1987), p. 7, and "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirits," *op. cit.*, p. 215.

38. "Ritorno al Profeta?" *op. cit.* Here, Foucault writes about the revolution's double orientation: "It is . . . something old and, at the same time, something very distant in the future. It is to turn back to what Islam was at the time of the Prophet, and also to go forward."

39. James Schmidt and Thomas E. Wartenberg, "Foucault's Enlightenment: Critique, Revolution, and the Fashioning of the Self," in Michael Kelly, ed., *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1994), p. 297: "The importance of Iran for Foucault lies not in what the revolution may or may not have achieved but rather in the simple fact that it took place." Schmidt and Wartenberg do not seem aware of Foucault's Italian articles on Iran, and have based their interpretation on his more circumspect French articles.

40. Derrida's critique of Rousseau's voluntarist idea of community is relevant here. See Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 244-45. According to Adorno, the will is "the force that enables consciousness to leave its domain and so change what merely exists; its recoil is resistance." Theodore W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Continuum Books, 1973), p. 241.

41. "Ritorno al Profeta?" *op. cit.*

42. "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirits," *op. cit.*, p. 224: "The movement, as soon as it perceives slight differences, feels threatened. I believe the intolerance is there — and necessary."

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despotism and terror. He seems to have forgotten his own insight that resistance often extends the very relations of domination it seeks to resist.[43] The price he had to pay for his sensitivity to the revolution was that he had to occlude his own insights into the disciplinary mechanisms of power "from below." In fact, his enthusiastic response to the Iranian revolution betrays his lingering commitment to the ideas of the Enlightenment, particularly the idea of revolution as a liberation from bondage and servitude.[44] Here his own ideas can be used to criticize his analysis of the Iranian revolution and vice versa. Whereas his theoretical works make no reference to individual beliefs, intentions and actions, his account of the Iranian revolution concentrates on the participants' hopes and concerns.

Foucault's own ideas provide the basis for a critique of his downplaying the repressive aspects of the Iranian revolution, i.e., the way the emancipatory revolution, acting as a two-edged sword, created a new "carcereal society." From the very beginning, the clergy came to power and became the dominant group by manipulating the masses through a network of mosques and Khomeini's charisma. Foucault, however, paid little attention to religious power in the Iranian movement. Religious organization appears as a mere tool, without the slightest clue as to how religious groups actually used their organization to secure and widen their power. Presumably, the emancipatory movement was limited by the oppositional identity defined by religious institutions interested in creating and controlling it. Yet Foucault did not bother to probe the "consensual" disciplinary nature of the revolution as a "normalizing" process in which domination and emancipation are inseparably linked.[45] Otherwise, he might have concluded there was no innocent collectivity that was subsequently corrupted by the leadership,[46] and he might have anticipated the emergence of Khomeini as the

43. See his "Truth/Power," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

44. For more on this, see John Dunn, *Modern Revolutions: An Introduction to the Analysis of A Political Phenomenon* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

45. Foucault might have anticipated the post-revolutionary clerical intolerance had he paused on his insight that the revolution "is above all about a movement trying to give a permanent role to the traditional structures of Islamic society in political life." In "Ritorno al Profeta?" *op. cit.* For Foucault's ill-elaborated view of the "consensual disciplines," see "Politics and Ethics: An Interview," in *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 378-380.

46. There were numerous instances of abhorrent behavior on the part of revolting masses, e.g., the burning of banks and Pepsi trucks by the mobs chanting anti-Bahai slogans, and the burning of Teheran's red light district, killing scores of prostitutes, by the frenzied protesters who boasted of "cleansing the city" and regaining their "dignity." See Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, *The State and Populism in Iran*, doctoral dissertation, Boston University, 1988.

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embodiment of justice. He might also have inquired as to whose interests are served by the revolution. Could the revolution end up benefiting the privileged? These questions are sidestepped because he rejected the idea that the popular movement represented a national "class alliance."[47]

Foucault's analysis slipped into the very error his theories had sought to correct by duplicating a binary model of the center versus the subjects, the powerful versus the powerless.[48] Thus he saw the incumbent regime's toleration of opposition throughout 1978 not as sign of liberalization but of the discontinuity of power. Despite his acknowledgment that liberalization had inadvertently contributed to strengthening the opposition, he saw only the regime's defensiveness.[49]At best, he saw the ensuing power struggle between the state and the revolutionaries in terms of the way in which the actions of the former incited the latter, but not the multiple channels of influence between the two camps, how Islamization operated on both sides of the political divide. Consequently, the Shah regime's excommunication of "Islamic Marxists" ended up contributing to the intensification of efforts by revolutionaries to emphasize their authentic, home-grown religious identity which, in turn, prompted the regime to stress as well its religious pedigree.[50]

Although conceptually sophisticated, on the whole Foucault's account of the role of religion in revolutionary Iran is not very original: "It is today what it has been repeatedly in the past: the form that the political struggle assumes as soon as it mobilizes the popular classes. It forms a force out of the infinite dissatisfactions, hates, misery, desperation. . . . [Religion] provides an irreducible force . . . and can oppose state power."[51] These views have been around for some time.[52] A more serious criticism here has to do with Foucault's comment that in the course of the "cassette revolution" the masses heeded the exiled ayatollah's (tape-recorded) calls out of their free will and without him being

47. In "Iran: The Spirit of a World Without Spirits," *op. cit.*, p. 219: "What we witnessed was not the result of an alliance, for example, between various political groups. Nor was it the result of a compromise between social classes." He was dead wrong about alliances. At the height of the revolution, Khomeini did consult "with opposition groups over a common strategy." See *Kayhan* (October 25, 1978).

48. See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988).

49. Foucault may have drawn too many analogies between the Iranian and the French revolutions. For his views on the decomposition of the French *ancièn règime*, see *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

50. Thus, a new press law promulgated by the pre-revolutionary Parliament banned all publications deemed "contrary to Islam." *Kayhan*, September 23, 1978.

51. "Teheran: la Fede contro Scià," *op. cit.*

52. See Christian Jambet, "The Constitution of the Subject and Spiritual Practice," in *Michel Foucault Philosopher* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 233-247.

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"enthroned."[53] This is very unFoucauldian. The hierarchical split between the transmitter and the receiver becomes undistorted communication, without any hint of the revolution's new imperialism of representation and the related subordination of every participant to the inclusive but authoritarian cult of the personality. When all is said and done, Foucault does not provide a really adequate analysis of Islamic populism.

A Critical Theory of Islamic Populism?

The rise of "political Islam" in Iran and elsewhere seems to indicate that new conflicts and new social movements have developed, which are rather different from older types of class struggle centered on production relations. Rather, they concern primarily issues of socialization/cultural reproduction, i.e., "one-sided rationalization," "cultural impoverishment," and "reification of the lifeworld." According to Habermas, these movements address the question, "How to defend or reinstate the endangered ways of life?" and can only be resolved by overcoming the distortions and pathologies in the "lifeworld."[54] In this context, Islamic populism appears primarily as a defensive movement concerned with protecting the "lifeworld" against further encroachment by the system. The post-revolutionary Islamization of national life in Iran seems to confirm Habermas' account of "identity movements" aimed at strengthening "the institutional framework that subjects system maintenance to the normative restrictions of the lifeworld."[55]

Habermas, of course, writes about Western societies and his theories cannot be automatically transposed to the study of Islamic populism.[56] The latter, in fact, may necessitate some modifications in his account. In a nutshell, were Habermas to confront "petrolic" societies (OPEC and non-OPEC), he would realize that, contrary to his theory, the media of money and power cannot be distributed between the economic system and state apparatuses. Functioning

53. "La Rivolta dell'Iran Corre sui Nastri delle Minicassette," in *Corriere della Sera* (November 19, 1978). According to Foucault, "The great ayatollahs of the present time, those who stand up to the king, the police and the army, those who have made the entire population go to the squares, no one has enthroned them, but all have listened to them. This is true even in the smallest communities." See "Teheran: la Fede contro lo Scià," *op. cit.*

54. Jürgen Habermas, "New Social Movements," *Telos*, Vol. 49 (1981), pp. 33-37.

55. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Volume Two, *op. cit.*, p. 185. Offe has similarly written that "Every act of modernization not only has the positive aspect of improvement, it is also marked by the actually ambivalent aspect of restructuring living conditions through brutal and irritating interference and encroachment." See Claus Offe, *Contradictions of the Welfare State* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T., 1987), p. 212.

56. See Stephen K. White's criticisms in *The Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas: Reason, Justice & Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

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as essential components of the economy, so-called "rentier" states face crises different from those he described.[57] For one thing, "motivation" crises not only tend to occur in both economic and political "subsystems," but they stand in a different relation to "legitimation deficits."[58]

Habermas overemphasizes the pathology-producing impacts of the "mediatizing" mechanisms of the economy and the bureaucracy. Consequently, notwithstanding his tendency to romanticize the lifeworld,[59] he underestimates specific lifeworld problems that can be traced to the turbulence of its constituent components,[60] e.g., the fragmentation of religious consciousness. Habermas occludes the autonomous logic of the devolution of worldviews and, worse, precludes a critical scrutiny of the potential

57. This is the "rentier state" theory which maintains, among other things, that in rentier societies, with little or no taxes, the citizens are far less demanding in terms of political accountability. See Hossein Mahdavi, "Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran," in M.A. Cook, ed., *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970); also, Giacomo Luciani, ed., *The Arab State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). There are several problems with this theory. It deduces the totality of the state — its administrative mechanisms, budgetary priorities, etc. — from the "rentier structure." Typical formulations tend to identify the "rentier state" with its operation as a rent collecting mechanism. But government revenue is a necessary condition of its institutions and not its fundamental mechanism. The oil "rent" coordinating operation of the state must not be confused with its overall *modus operandi*. In addition, this theory suffers from the reduction of state decisions to economic interests. For a modified version of this theory that recycles all its limitations, see Lisa Anderson, "Peace and Democracy in the Middle East: The Constraints of Soft Budgets," in *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 49. No. 1 (Summer 1995), pp. 25-45.

58. "A legitimation crisis must be based on a motivation crisis — that is, a discrepancy declared by the state, the educational and the occupational systems on the one hand, and the motivation supplied by the socio-cultural system on the other." *The Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press,), 1975), p. 130. In revolutionary Iran, the motivation crisis affected the functionaries of the old regime, who were disoriented by the Shah's belated attempt to offset the revolutionary momentum by means of a bureaucratic house cleaning. This led to complaints such as the following: "Was this to be our reward for faithfully carrying out the monarch's policy for years? Are we, the technocrats who built modern Iran, now to be sacrificed for its critics?" Quoted in John Stempel, *Inside the Iranian Revolution* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 109. This belies the claim that the pre-revolutionary state "had become a sphere of decision-making, more or less insulated from social pressures." See Simon Bromely, *Rethinking Middle East Politics* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994), p. 151.

59. Anthony Giddens, "Reason Without Revolution? Habermas' *Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns*," in Richard Bernstein, ed., *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T., 1985), pp. 95-121. Piccone seems to share Habermas' romanticization of the lifeworld when writing about the "rapidly fading constraints of pre-modern provincialism." See Paul Piccone, "Postmodern Populism," in *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995), pp. 45-86.

60. See Fred Dallymer's criticisms in his "Critical Theory and Reconciliation" in Don S. Browning and Francis Schussler Fiorenza, eds., *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), pp. 18-121.

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distortions created by attempts to reconquer the lifeworld.

Although Habermas has retreated from his previous celebration of "post-metaphysical" thinking, his half-hearted reconciliation with religious-transcendental worldviews suffers from the absence of any firm principles. What is missing is a serious attempt to draw the full implications of his insights emphasizing religion's endurance, its "therapeutic experience," and its role in fostering a communicative ethics.[61] At any rate, by focusing on the multiple channels of communication between the state and "public spheres," and on the imperatives of social and system integration, his analysis may contribute to a theory of populism. Habermas has argued that extensive state intervention prevents focusing on the contradictions of capitalism and shifts political action away from potential structural transformations to the state.[62] Shortcutting a long theoretical detour, this line of inquiry paves the way for a dual analysis of populism: a) as a anti-hegemonic politics posing alternative forms of knowledge and power, and b) as a preemptive politics from above aiming at establishing a relation between state and society by shaping and reshaping social subsystems — a politics of survival by the incumbent regimes. How does this apply to the Iranian experience?[63]

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61. According to Habermas, religious and other traditional values function as "stencils according to which needs are shaped." Similarly, the renewal of tradition is said to be "ever more strongly dependent on individuals' readiness for critique and capacity for innovation." See Habermas' "reply" in Browning and Fiorenza, eds., *Habermas, Modernity and Public Theology, op. cit.* See, also, Marsha Aileen Hewitt, *Critical Theory of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Joseph Runzo, ed., *Ethics, Religion and the Good Society* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1992); and S. Cromwell Crawford, *World Religions and Global Ethics* (New York: Paragon House, 1989).

62. "The more effectively class conflict, which a private enterprise economy builds into a society, can be dammed up and held latent, the more persistently are problems pressed into the foreground which do not immediately harm interests which are calculable on the basis of class." *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume Two, op. cit*, p. 391.

63. See Pierre-Andrè Taguieff, "Political Science Confronts Populism: from a Conceptual Mirage to a Real Problem," in *Telos* 103 (Spring 1995), pp. 9-44. There are several problems with Tagueiff's otherwise thorough analysis of populism. First, he tries to portray "protest" and "identitarian" populisms as two distinct ideal-types and as two poles of the same phenomenon. Either way, this classification is suspect, among other things, because identity logic is part of any populist protest. Second, he adopts a minimalist view of populism as a form of mobilization, a style of politics, which coincides with the experience of "populist regimes" in, e.g., Brazil, as his own discussion shows. This undercuts his insistence that populism does not presuppose a particular type of regime. Third, his claim that "all populisms are in some ways national-populisms" disregards the deterritorialization of trans-national populism, such as Islamic populism. Finally, in one way or other all populists advocate social justice. Taguieff overlooks the levelling dimension common to all forms of populism and readily dismisses the notion that populism embodies any particular ideological content.

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Populism in Iran

One of the salient features of populism in Iran concerns the "national-popular" character of *Twelver* Shiism, Iran's dominant sect since the early 16th century. To go over a fairly familiar story, Iranian Shiism has a history of both passive and active resistance to oppression, a strong messianic impulse, a built-in emotionalism, and an organic connection with the Iranian national ethos.[64] The national spirit did not become self-conscious until the last couple of decades of the 19th century.[65] Its main defect was (and to some extent still is) the existence of several sub-national, i.e., ethnic, provincial, etc., corporate identities.[66] A distinctive Iranian identity may be traced back some two thousand years.[67] The modern Iranian "nation," however, first emerged in the 19th century, as a result of the confluence of state-building, Western intellectual and technological influence, and local reaction to European colonialism and Ottoman reforms. On the whole, this reaction took two forms: nativist-religious and Western-secularist.

Religious nationalism first arose in connection with a clergy-sanctioned revolt against the foreign monopoly of tobacco (1891-92), and soon after, with the Constitutional Revolution (1906).[68] As in the recent revolution, the Constitutional Revolution featured an uneasy symbiosis of two impulses of Iranian nationalism, threatening a break-up of the country.[69] This culminated in a new authoritarianism (1925-41) closely following the

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64. For background on Shiism, see Heinz Helm, *Shiism* (Edinburgh University Press, 1991); Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shii Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); Abdulaziz Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism* (Albany: SUNY, 1982). As Moltman has observed, "The messianic idea has the weakness of the preliminary and provisional which does not give of itself, but preserves itself, which cannot die because it refuses to live." Quoted in Leroy S. Rounder, ed., *Knowing Religiously* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), p. 16. On Shiite "emotionalism," see Peter Chelkowski, "Popular Shi'i Mourning Rituals," in *Al-Serat*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1986).

65. Yan Richard, *Le Shi'isme en Iran* (Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 1980); Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); and , Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran* (London: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1966).

66. Mostafa Vaziri, *Iran as Imagined Nation: The Construction of National Identity* (New York: Paragon Press, 1993).

67. Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran* (Rome: Instituto Italiano Per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989).

68. See Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran: Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982). This is by far the most important work on Iranian historiography.

69. See Mongol Bayat, *Iran's First Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). Bayat's claim that the *ulama*'s participation in the Constitutional Revolution was not "motivated by doctrinal or religionational considerations" (p. 261) is questionable. It overlooks the fusion of modern nationalist thought in the *ulama*'s outlook.

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Turkish path of secular nation-building. Thus a conscious effort to promote statist nationalism went hand in hand with the removal of the *ulama*'s control over education, the judiciary, taxation, and the like.[70] The forced localization of religion aided the centralization of power, but was hardly conducive to an evolution of a "civic religion." This did not happen, not just because of Shiism's doctrinal rigidities or the absence of a viable "reformation,"[71] but also as a result of religion's viability as a conduit for popular and nationalist pressures.[72]

As is well known, during the democratic interlude following the allied invasion of Iran (1941-53), the religious caste resurfaced and, while joining the crusade to nationalize Iranian oil, bulked on the question of social reform. Chief among the latter was land reform. As it happened, most *ulama* sided with the land owning class in opposing any meaningful land redistribution.[73] Operating in an increasingly polarized polity marked by the growth of the communist movement,[74] these *ulama* did not blink an eye when the fragile liberal-nationalist government of Mosssadegh was overthrown by a hastily-arranged coup aided by the CIA and the British secret service.[75]

Although it suppressed democracy for quarter of a century, the post-coup regime did not represent a strategic defeat for Iranian nationalism.[76] On the contrary, the state-building process under the second Pahlavi Shah occurred

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70. See Ali Banani, *The Modernization of Iran, 1925-41* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

71. As Afghani has stated: "From the viewpoint of contemporary needs, only a moderate sensibility and thinkers such as Calvin and Luther can separate religion from superstition and adopt the religious principles to the necessities of today's civilization." See "Notgh dar Mored-e Ta'alim va Tarbiyat," in *Iranshenasi*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (February 1925).

72. This is a point aptly described by Said Amir Arjomand in *The Shadow of God and the Hidden Imam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

73. Seeh Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy-State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany: SUNY, 1980).

74. Fakhrodin Azimi, Iran: The *Crisis of Democracy* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1989).

75. See Sepehr Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982).

76. Claims that there was a "clientilistic relation" between Iran and the US often ignore the "complex interdependence" of the two regimes and the increasing "uncoupling" of the Shah's diplomacy from the logic of the Cold War. See, e.g., Mark Gasiorowski, *US Foreign Policy and the Shah: Building A Client State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). Here the definition of "clientilism" is too wide in its equation of interrelations with meta-sovereign operations and too narrow in that it ignores the disruptive liaison between the Shah's nationalist initiatives and his overall relations with the West. Keohane altogether overlooks these problems when discussing OPEC's "destruction of hegemony." See Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 184.

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along secular nationalist and modernization lines. Whereas by the early 1970s the Shah had fulfilled Mossadegh's dream of nationalizing oil and was spearheading OPEC's "geoeconomics" while developing a foreign policy of "*de facto* non-alignment,"[77] his social engineering, i.e., land reforms and other items of the "White Revolution," represented a milestone in the country's emergence from feudalism and far surpassed the Mossadeghists' agenda. In retrospect, there is little doubt these reforms amounted to a Gramscian "passive revolution" best described as "economic populism."[78]

The Shah's economic populism, which entailed schemes such as "profit sharing" and "joint investiture" with the workers, was a conscious effort to "eradicate all social contradictions."[79] These schemes were complemented with a wide range of "public policies," such as state subsidies for food, education, transportation, health care, housing, culture and the arts, which as time went on increased the sense of entitlement on the part of the recipient population. So long as the oil "pie" was large enough to sustain the scope of these entitlements, economic populism perpetuated the *status quo*. By the same token, these very same initiatives made the state the object of intense political attention and created several unintended consequences. Thus the "profit sharing" scheme led to the deterioration of business confidence, reflected in a record capital flight and the diversion of capital to unproductive activities.[80]

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77. See, Sepher Zabih, "Iran's International Posture: De Facto Non-Alignment Within a Pro-Western Alliance," in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer 1970). Similarly, Hunter has argued that "the basic objective (of the Shah's regime) was the advancement of Iran's national interests." Shirin T. Hunter, *Iran and the World* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 29.

78. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, translated by Quinton Hoare and C. Norwell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 116. Economic populism refers to "a reformist set of policies tailored to promote development without explosive class conflict." See Rudiger Dornbasch and Sebastian Edwards, eds., *The Macroeconomics of Populism in Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). As a result of these reforms, land was distributed among more than two million peasants, and thousands of workers became shareholders in 1,439 enterprises, including 160 large factories. For details see Afrasiabi, *The State and Populism in Iran, op. cit.* These figures belie Hooglund's contention that they were "conservative" in nature. See Eric Hooglund, *Land and Revolution in Iran* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1982).

79. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Be Sooy-e Tamadon-e Bozorg* (Teheran: The Ministry of Culture and Arts, 1977), p. 20. The Shah constantly sought to outdo the Left in its zeal for social revolution. This led his court minister to conclude that "it is the government itself which should be regarded the chief agent of subversion." See Assadullah Alam, *The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969-1977* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), p. 537.

80. See Anthony Parsons, *The Pride and the Fall: Iran 1974-79* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984), p. 90.

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The main shortcomings of the Shah's populism had to do with the implementation of his programs, since state officials and the landed elite established cozy relations. Consequently, the land laws were never fully applied. Similarly, there were no adequate follow-ups after the early 1970s, when technocratic growth replaced emphasis on economic justice. Finally, economic populism barely reached the urban and rural poor, who swelled the margins of society.[81] In the absence of a social safety net, the Shah's regime unwittingly propelled the poor toward religious groups engaged in charitable activities.[82]

Despite their flaws, the Shah's nationalist and populist policies might have appeased at least some of his opponents. There could have been a rapprochement between them, had it not been for the lingering stigma associated with the coup, the Shah's personal identification with the West, the increasing atrophy of palace rule, the violation of rights and the frustration of democratic expectations. Instead of undertaking a meaningful democratization, by mid 1970s the Shah opted for a single party system in the attempt to integrate the population.[83] The result was disastrous. This created a legitimation problem for a regime already regarded as anti-nationalist (*zedd-e melli*) or, to paraphrase the poet Barahani, the "basest stooge of imperialism."[84] This widespread misperception not only facilitated the diffusion of a variety of revolutionary doctrines but also shortcircuited any reformist options. By establishing a simple equivalence between the struggle for democracy and anti-imperialism, it paved the way for collaboration among various secular and religious opposition groups.

Crucial here is the globalization of Islamicist movements. In a sense,

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81. Farhad Kazemi, *Poverty and Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1980).

82. It is estimated that during the 1950s taxes paid to the *ulama* exceeded those paid to the government. See M. Yapp, *The Near East Since World War One* (London: Longman, 1991), p. 337. Unfortunately, there is no reliable information about the religious taxes during the 1960s and 1970s. According to Akhavi, "The clergymen in Iran continue to disburse funds, aggregate followers on specific issues, articulate needs, wield the symbols of culture, administer shrines and manage and own lands." *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran*, *op. cit*, p. 179.

83. See Jerrold D. Green, "Pseudo-participation and Counter-mobilization: Roots of the Iranian Revolution," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. XIII, Nos. 1-4 (1980).

84. Reza Barahani, *The Crowned Cannibals* (New York: Vintage, 1977), p. 107. Yarshater's claim that the revolution was "an angry response to the overall situation that threatened our national identity and pride" indicates that the old misperception is still very much alive. See Ehsan Yarshater, "Hoviyat-e Melli," in *Iran Nameh*, Vol. 3 (Summer 1993), p. 429.

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Iran was a latecomer to the "Islamization of political knowledge" attributed to the works of Hassan al-Bana and Seyed Qutb in Egypt, Iqbal in Pakistan, etc.[85] Whether original or borrowed, the Iranian flirtation with the "Islamization of political knowledge" produced a variety of outcomes — an "Islamic left" (Shariati), an "Islamic liberalism" (Bazargan), and a neo-traditional "Islamic government" (Khomeini), all articulating utopian versions of an alternative Islamic society *(jamme'eh-e'tawhidi)*.[86] The problem with these utopian efforts, however, was that they lacked a concept of the modern state and were not rooted in concrete history.[87] All these groups embraced some version of Islam as a "total and comprehensive" system of beliefs,[88] without any understanding of the boundaries between different social spheres. This is why their often modernist pretensions wither with the inevitable conclusion that their core is traditional or, at best, quasi-modern.[89]

An important aspect of this traditionalism is the anthropocentric image of the "perfect man," [90] so prevalent in the writings of Khomeini,

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85. See *Islamization of Knowledge* (Washington, D.C. IIIT, 1991). The only thing credible about the "Islamization of knowledge" seems to be the political aspect. Otherwise, recent emphasis on "Islamic sociology," "Islamic science" and so on, appears as so many hopeless, ethnocentric attempts to domesticate social science for the sake of dogma.

86. See Ruth Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (Phillip Allen, 1990). A number of "state intellectuals" (*rowshanfekran-e dowlati*) directly contributed to this Islamic utopian movement. See Seyyed Hossein Naser, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* (New York: Longman, 1975); and Ehsan Naraghi, *Ghorbat-e Gharbi* (Teheran: Muaasaseh-e Entesharat-i, 1974).

87. Shariati and other Shiite dissidents could promise whatever came to their head, assuring their followers it was based on superior knowledge, while leaving the details of the promised society to be worked out by others. Thus Mahdi Bazargan, the apostle of Islamic liberalism, clung to the traditionalist notion that "religion must dominate politics and control it," the stated reason being that religion "does not recognize any borders" and that "of the eight principles of religion, four are about social issues and four about the foundation of politics." See *Binahayat Koocheh-a* (Teheran: Bazargan, 1963), p. 77; and Bazargan, *Niaz-e Khoob* (Teheran, n.p., n.d.), pp. 124-125.

88. Thus Morteza Mutahhari wrote about Islam's "comprehensive and all-encompassing tendency." See *Usul-e Aghayed-e Eslami* (Teheran: n.p., 1977), p. 56. This recalls Rodinson's point that "Islamic ideology" is totalitarian "in that it tends to extend its directives and judgements to all areas of social and private life." See Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and the Modern World* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1981), p. 94.

89. This belies the interpretation by Halliday and others that Khomeini "recycled Western ideas." See Fred Halliday, "International Relations and Its Discontents," in *International Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (October 1995), p. 739.

90. "This is an ideal human being (who) passes through nature and understands God and reaches God. . . . In nature he is God's successor. . . . is God-like in exile on earth." See Ali Shariati, *Eslamshenasi* (Teheran: Ershad, 1981), pp. 100-102. According to Khomeini, the "perfect man is God's vice-regent on the entire world." Quoted in "Ensan-e Kamel," in *Nashre Andisheh*, No. 5 (Spring 1993).

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Shariati, Mutahhari, and others. Based on the twin notions of leadership (*imamat*) and innocence (*maasumiyat*), the idea of "perfect" or "exemplary" man legitimated, for Khomeini in particular, the doctrine of the "rule of the jurist" (*Velayat-e Faghih*). This doctrine has provided a normative basis for the perpetuation of theocratic rule in Iran.[91] Ultimately, the terror of an Islamic humanism, which construes the leading jurist as near perfect and divine, is responsible for this theocracy.[92]

Another common thread running through these various religious perspectives was their populism: they romanticized the liberating potential of Islam, dealt with justice and tyranny in the abstract, combined transcendental and immanent forms of social criticism, appealed to people and not classes, emphasized authenticity, and rejected the Shiite tradition of dissimulation. There were serious differences among these accounts, as can be seen in Bazargan's emphasis on individual rights,[93] Shariati's relentless attack on the "ossified institution" of the *ulama*, and Khomeini's anti-intellectualism.[94] Yet, these differences did not overshadow their common denominators (at least, for a while after the revolution) and they intersected as the ideological pillars of a revolution requiring "the unity of the word" — a key revolutionary slogan etched by Khomeini.[95]

The revolution itself can be attributed to the ineptness of the old regime, a breakdown in social integration and the concurrent increase in solidarity among the discontented population. It was basically an urban phenomenon involving a multiplicity of disparate groups and organizations with heterogenous aims, but welded together by a single aim: the

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91. For an excellent study of Khomeini's philosophy, see Alexander Kynsh, "Irfan Revisited: Khomeini and the Legacy of Islamic Mystical Philosophy," in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Autumn 1992), pp. 631-655.

92. To dismantle this humanism requires kneading together the pillars of a new Islamic (human and natural) ecology. See Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, "Towards an Islamic Ecotheology," in *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 33-49, as well as the series of articles on "Islamic Futurism" written in *Kayhan Havai* during the period 1989-95.

93. See Said Barzin, "Constitutionalism and Democracy in the Religious Ideology of Mehdi Bazargan," in *British Journal of the Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1994). This is a good summary of Bazargan's thought, but suffers from lack of a critical scrutiny of the dark sides of Bazargan's ideas.

94. See Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, "Islam and Populism in Iran," in *Discussion Paper,* The African Studies Center at Boston University, No. 5 (Spring 1982).

95. Behind this slogan was a half-hearted recognition of the plurality of forces in the revolution that was chocked by a monist emphasis on solidarity based on Islam. This explains the limitations of Khomeini's populism after the revolution, the fact that he could not prevent a breakdown of this unity and keep ideological differences to the background, as he had during the revolution.

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overthrow of the Shah. This populism was a complex mixture of theology and politics evolving along religious lines. Undoutedly, Khomeini's charisma played a central role in giving the revolution the momentum and discipline necessary for success.[96] The price tag, however, was the imposition of a pre-modern pastoral authority.[97] Thus revolutionary zeal coincided with a combination of autonomy and self-surrender — a new mastery that transformed revolutionary charismatic authority into despotism.[98] The perpetuation of this despotism was based on the recycling of the revolutionary momentum through a policy of continuous mobilization directed against internal and external threats, justified by Khomeini's dictum that "people must remain on the stage." The result was a post-revolutionary system thoroughly consumed by the populist "dimension." A wholesale purge of the functionaries of the old regime thus went hand in hand with the creation of a vast network of civil and (para) military organizations, e.g., revolutionary guards, revolutionary committees, and the (now defunct) Islamic Republican Party, designed to assimilate[99] the masses and to exclude independent organizations of workers, state employees, leftist and ethnic groups. The channeling of mass participation generated a new kind of state which, with the help of new symbols of dignity (e.g., the disinherited), generated system integration by establishing a new ideological framework within which capitalists and workers are considered different but equally legitimate social

96. See Ahmad Ashraf, "Charisma, Theocracy, and Men of Power in Post-revolutionary Iran," in Myron Weiner and Ali Banuazizi, eds., *The Politics of Social Transformation in Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. 101-151.

97. Khomeini's one time designated successor, Ayatollah Montazeri, once stated: "Some students view *Velayat-e Faghih* as dictatorship. They must be told that *Velayat-e Faghih* does not mean dictatorship. It is like child guardianship." Quoted in Rasalat (February 1, 1988). Thus, for example, when there was a debate over the name of the new republic, Khomeini stated that "whoever's path is not with Islam is our enemy. . . . Even if 36 million people say yes [to the label Democratic Islamic Republic], I still say no." This point is overlooked by both Abrahamian and Zubaida when they write without any reservation about the "modernism" of the Khomeinist phenomenon. See Abrahamian, *Khomeinism, op. cit.*; and Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People and the State* (London: Routledge, 1989).

98. An important tool for the perpetuation of this despotism was the threat of "deviants." In his will, Khomeini wrote about the "inevitable penetration of 'corrupters on earth' and enemies of Islam in all branches of government." Since his death, Khomeini's successor has followed suit by constantly reminding the nation of "plots by the enemies of Islam." Recently, he has included the attempts to "juxtapose Islam and national interests" as the latest manifestation of such plots. See *Rasalat* (October 4, 1995).

99. Another assimilationist practice has been the transformation of Friday sermons into a religious-political event. See Heidar G. Azadanloo, "Formalization of Friday Sermons and Consolidation of the Islamic Republic of Iran," in *Critique,* Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1992).

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categories.[100] Notwithstanding the escalation of demands,[101] Khomeini and his followers broke off dialogue with other dissident groups and resorted to pseudo-elections and the outright use of force to institute a "pure Muhammadian society." This, in turn, almost led to civil war (1980-1982), the flight of the educated strata from the country, and Khomeini's politics of factional "balancing."[102]

Crucial in Khomeinist populism is the perpetuation of a state of emergency revolving around opposition to the West.[103] The demonization of the US, already anticipated in the revolutionary slogan, "After the Shah, it is America's turn," ensured a "permanent Jihad — the guarantee of revolutionary continuity."[104] This has led to a deflection of the dissenters' energies toward well-chosen targets. As a corollary, a whole set of concepts, such as "liberalism" and "Americanist Islam," were aptly used to excommunicate individuals and groups not in harmony with Khomeini's "total institution."[105]

Another key feature of this populism was the deterritorialization of the Islamic revolution in terms of the trans-national imperatives of Islamic cartography.[106] Led by self-proclaimed "warrior-priests" (*rouhanioun-e mobarez*), the new regime was thus fated to "export the revolution" so Iran could become the "motherland" and Khomeini the

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100. See Cyrus Bina and Hamid Zanganeh, eds., *Capitalism and the Islamic Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

101. During the last months of the revolution, the striking population had garnered substantial concessions from the Shah's regime, such as generous pay increases and tax breaks, which translated into exorbitant demands on the regime that followed it.

102. For a superb discussion of post-revolutionary "elite factionalism," see Shahrough Akhavi, "Elite Factionalism in the Islamic Republic of Iran," in *The Middle East Journal,* Vol. 41 (1987), pp. 181-201.

103. Thus the importance of the 444 days American hostage crisis, which Khomeini called a "second revolution," appropriately so as it opened a fresh avenue for popular mobilization and an excellent excuse to purge unwanted liberal and non-doctrinaire elements from the government.

104. Quoted in *Payam-e Hajj*, No. 195 (November 1988), p. 14.

105. Khomeini's *Velayt-e Faghih* was a law unto itself. It did not and could not be controlled by public opinion and did not lend itself to democratic accountability. This can be seen in the following statement by Ayatollah Yazdi, one of Khomeini's close allies: "In the Islamic Republic, if the majority of people vote for a person, if that person is not linked with [Imam's] vote, those votes are void." In *Rasalat* (May 6, 1989).

106. Islamic cartography refers to *Umma* (Islamic community) — something endowed with a content, a history, a telos and a trajectory. The idea that all Muslims are part of a "single nation" and that the Islamic regime is duty-bound to create such a unity is stated in Article 10 of the Constitution. See *Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, translated by Hamid Algar (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1980), p. 11.

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pope of Islam.[107] Islamic statecraft was thus stylized toward globalization and the deterritorialization of its values, to the detriment of conservative Arab neighbors, including Iraq, whose leader seized the opportunity to act as the anti-Iranian bulwark to settle old disputes.[108] The brutal war that ensued (1980-88) — what Khomeini called a "heavenly bliss" — had a tunnel vision effect on the Islamic Republic as it refueled populist mobilization by, among other things, recycling the romantic notion of the citizen-soldier. The long war and the threat of war (with the US) aided internal cohesion in a system where old class and nepotistic ties were replaced by solidarity based on religious and political criteria.

This new system required, first of all, extensive reorganization of the army and the old bureaucracies, now complemented by new, post-revolutionary agencies (e.g., Jihad for Reconstruction), constituting a complex "double state" based on the confluence of moral-ethical and bureaucratic rationalities. The "expanded" state has exhibited a split from the very beginning and has been held together by the religious-based pattern of recruitment and employment, whereby the largely unprofessional revolutionary cadre were able to take over the state apparatuses and turn them into their "fiefs." Acting as the new guardians of capitalist relations in Iran, these Islamic Jacobins headed by Khomeini adopted a reformist policy under the cloack of fervent revolutionary rhetoric. Unlike other populist reformisms, however, the absence of genuine socio-economic reform can be attributed to the fact that Islamic

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107. Ayatollah Meshkini once stated: "Today, the Imam [Khomeini] has vice-regency over 50 million Muslims and tomorrow, God willing, he will rule over one billion Muslims." *Rasalat* (January 18, 1988). Most likely, Khomeini's infamous *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie was motivated by the pan-Islamicist impulse. See also Farhang Rajaee, "Islamic Ideology and Worldview: The Cultural Export of Revolution," in John L. Esposito, ed., *The Islamic Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Miami: Florida International University, 1990). Saddled with the pan-Islamicist mission, the Iranian state was, consequently, turned into a movement-state that constantly aborted its own momentum for institutionalization by recycling the globalist revolutionary momentum. This deterritorialization stemmed from pan-Islamic solidarity (*assabiya*), which called for violent opposition to any kind of ethnic-based nationalism. Khomeini and his followers, however, embraced the notion of "love of country" (*hobb-e vatan*) which, in turn, implicated them in an implicit religious nationalism. See Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, *After Khomeini: New Directions in Iran's Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994).

108. On the Iran-Iraq war, see Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, *Iran and Iraq at War* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1988); and Farhang Rajaee, ed., *The Iran-Iraq War: The Politics of Aggression* (Miami, FL: University of Florida Press, 1993).

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populists inherited an "overreformed" society, to the merchant's powerful role, as well as the emergence of a whole new group of privileged *nouveaux riches*, most of whom owed their wealth to their connection to the state. Consequently, a society featuring flagrant income and wealth disparities emerged under the guise of egalitarian rule.[109] Renewed class warfare was staved off by strict labor laws, state-controlled labor unions, etc., as well as by the carrots of employment, subsidies, urban and rural improvements, a fledging cooperative sector, a new sense of citizen participation, and a modicum of respect for the "private realm."[110] The levelling effects of the ruling ideology culminated in a conscientious policy of rural improvement and a haphazard welfare initiative through subsidies, the "coupon-economy," clientlistic foundations (e.g., the Martyrs Foundation) and the like.[111]

Throughout its existence, the Islamic Republic has pursued contradictory priorities. Craven appeasement of the disinherited has gone hand in hand with the growth of a capitalist state. As a result, demands generated by the new sense of entitlements on the part of the growing population greatly exceeds available public resources, leading to serious disfunctions in economic policies.[112] These contradictions have found their political corollary in a "mixed" part-theocratic, part-republican system, whose founding father became increasingly enamored of state power, and whose constitution affirms the principle of popular

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109. See Hooshang Amirahmadi, *Revolution and Economic Transition: The Experience of Iran* (New York: SUNY, 1990). Although useful, this work misjudges unemployment and poverty in Iran by ignoring the vibrant "informal sector."

110. In an important 8 point edict issued in 1981, Khomeini ordered the unruly guards and the *komiteh* to respect the sanctity of private homes. In limiting state encroachment in the private sphere, Khomeini also undermined his "moral totalism," which called for Islamization of all aspects of life. In turn, this quasi-liberal tolerance led to a sharp distinction between private and public life, with the former as the nurturing ground of a secular sensibility. For Khomeini's edict, see Shaul Bakhash, *The Reign of the Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

111. There are signs of decentralization of power in post-revolutionary Iran. The provinces bordering the newly-independent Central Asian republics have signed separate agreements with these republics and have enjoyed the kind of autonomy in decision-making that includes sub-national "para-diplomacy." For more on this, see Afrasiabi, *After Khomeini, op. cit*, Chapter on "The Making of Iran's Central Asia-Caucasus Policy." For the concept "para-diplomacy," see I. D. Duchacek, D. Latouche and G. Stevenson, *Perforated Sovereignties and International Relations: Trans-Sovereign Contacts of Subnational Governments* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988).

112. See Massoud Karshenas and M. Hashem Pesaran, "Economic Reform and the Reconstruction of the Iranian Economy," in *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (Winter 1995), pp. 113-135.

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sovereignty only as a second order sovereignty (after His Deity).[113]

The democratic-republican aspect, highlighted by three plebiscites, four parliamentary and six presidential elections within the first 15 years of the new system's existence has provided the foundation for regular elite turn-over — especially within the Majlis. With the help of a multilayered filtering device to screen political candidates, such as the exclusionary Law on Freedom of the Parties, the system has ensured itself against the destabilizing consequences of "surprise elections." In practice, however, parliament has been less than satisfactory, not just because of theocratic intervention or factional politics, but also as a result of the countervailing role and power of the 12-member Council of Guardians, which has veto power over all legislation.[114] By the time of Khomeini's death, the friction between the two institutions had spilled into the open, prompting the creation of a para-legislative body, the Council on the Expediency of the (Islamic) Order, to act as an intermediary between them. This was part of a broader, pragmatist revision of the Constitution which included, first and foremost, the uncoupling of the institution of religious leadership (*marjaiyat*) from "leadership" (*rahbari*). As an initial step in formal separation of religion and politics, this was commensurate with the gradual distancing of the high ranking *ulama* from the state and a shift of the religious center of gravity from politics to faith. This is a positive development, since the previous conflation of state and religion had resulted in an internal colonization of the religious "sphere," whereby the various *ulama* were judged in terms of their loyalty to the regime. The increased differentiation has not meant more stability, partly because these changes are pragmatically

113. In his famous 1988 edict, Khomeini sanctioned "unlimited" state power that could, if need be, "revoke any agreements it concluded with people . . . [and] prohibit any matter religious or secular." See *Kayhan* (January 7, 1988). These excesses were meant to offset the debilitating influence of religious "dogmatics" and to free the government to deploy liberal solutions for the postwar economy. Bakhash misses this point. See Shaul Bakhash, "Iran: The Crisis of Legitimacy," in *Middle Eastern Lectures* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1995), pp. 99-119. Stereotypical classifications of the Iranian system as a "theocracy" pure and simple not only overlook the government's system of checks and balances, but also conflate the distinction between a republic and democracy, thus missing the point that the first refers to a regulative political notion while the second is a profoundly problematic concept. See David Held, *Political Theory and the Modern State* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989). These classifications ignore the complex diagram of power in the Iranian system, e.g., the fact that power "from below" exerts an incredible influence, and lapses into a power reductionism that confuses the vices or virtues of clerical leaders with the regime's institutional characteristic.

114. See Said Saffari, "The Legitimation of the Clergy's Right to Rule in the Iranian Constitution of 1979," in *British Journal of the Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1993).

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implemented and have yet to be fully rationalized. In fact, the leader's power has been increased in the new constitution, which puts him in charge of the supervision of national radio and television and the control of the Council on the Expediency of the (Islamic) Order. Consequently, the post-Khomeini order has become more totalitarian while less theocratic — all this while Iranian society has become more liberal.

A growing number of associations, groups, and publications, has emerged in Iran, which contradicts the stereotypical image of the Islamic Republic as a closed, hermetically intolerant society.[115] These developments have opened up more possibilities than the Islamic state can deal with.[116] Caught between the Scylla of religious dogmatists who want to reunite *marjaiyat* and leadership, and the Charybdis of modernist groups yearning for a straightforward republic unshackled by monarchic limitations, the post-Khomeini regime has had to deal with incompatible priorities. The "de-ideologization" attributed to the "second Islamic Republic" does not mean a clean break with the Khomeinist legacy.[117] Rather, this means an incomplete, haphazard revisionism based on the recognition that, in light of domestic groups unwilling to observe a quiet requiem for Khomeinism, there was no way to eliminate the legacy of charismatic authority short of precipitating a dangerous identity crisis. In early 1990s, this revisionism was staved off by the ideological hiatus of "pan-Arabism" due to the Kuwait crisis, as well as by the Soviet collapse (which Khomeini had anticipated in his blunt letter to Gorbachev that "Islam can easily fill the ideological vacuum"). Suddenly, the Khomeinist goal of making Iran into a "moral superpower" had been given a new life by the opening of a new window of opportunity, especially in Muslim Central Asia.

On the whole, ideological fixity and pragmatic policy reconsideration ended up coexisting, in part due to the gullibility of the Islamic "moderates" in charge, who thought Khomeini's fundamental precepts should be retained but the means altered, as if the means had nothing to do with the nature of the ends pursued. Notwithstanding the ideological fragmentation and the conservative side-effects of the policy changes, the "second"

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115. See, Kavah L. Afrasiabi, "Give Iran Credit for the Strides It Has Taken," in *The New York Times* (March 24, 1990).

116. Thus every time the government has evinced a greater tolerance for veil-lessness (*bi-hejabi*), this has met the stern objections of religious dogmatists, who complain about "ideological sell-out," compelling the government to intensify its surveillance of women's "dress code." See Kavah L. Afrasiabi, "Iran's Other Prisoners," in *The Boston Globe* (August 16, 1993).

117. See Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *After Khomeini* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

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Islamic Republic remained caught in a double bind, between Khomeinism and post-Khomeinism.[118] It remains to be seen whether this will culminate in a further secularization of the state or in a complete remixing of religion and politics. As it stands, the "mixed" system presents a paradox with respect to modernity.[119] Compared to the repressed past, it is a more open and accountable political system, even though on specific civil rights, e.g., the rights of women and religious minorities,[120] it has made a huge step backward. These paradoxes lend themselves to a postmodernist interpretation, which is contradicted by the Khomeinist "metanarrative."

Iranian advocates of secularism, who want to leap from the Islamic Republic to a secular republic, may be headed nowhere. What is needed is a gradualist approach that selectively secularizes law, economics, etc., while reconciling the Islamic ethos with modernist values. Most disturbing about present democratization strategies is that they remain outside legal boundaries. Thus the constitutional limits concerning what is possible have remained untapped. The premature and forced *Aufhebung* of religion and politics threatens the well-spring of those rights granted in the defective republic, e.g., the right of parliamentary accountability. What is needed is a redemptive reformism that seeks to retrieve participatory democracy and self-government from the demagogic populism of the power elite and to articulate it within a democratic populist agenda from below, fully cognizant

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118. The new leader, though without Khomeini's charisma and religious rank, has succumbed to self-delusion and wants to assume the superhuman task of establishing a sacred order. He has spearheaded the assault on "Western cultural invasion" by, among other things, issuing a *fatwa* that discourages music classes. He remains, however, a pathetic figure who can satisfy no one. Moreover, he may soon recognize that leading the *Volksgeist* necessitates a more confined and less interventionist approach, instead of roaming hopelessly all over the government. At the same time, in compulsively mimicking Khomeini,the new leader has retained the populist bias that works against any undue economic and bureaucratic change. Thus he ordered a turn-around from the liberal Five Year Plan (1989-1994) by emphasizing "social justice" and "self-reliance" in the Second Five Year Plan (1995-2000). In doing so, the leader's demagogic populism has prevented the kind of deep structural adjustments the post-war economy needed, i.e., deep cuts in government spending to reduce the budget deficit and free market forces to promote efficiency.

119. See Eric Rouleau, "The Islamic Republic of Iran: Paradoxes and Contradictions in a Changing Society," in *The Middle East Insight*, Vol. 11, No. 5 (July-August 1995), pp. 54-59.

120. Compared to the past, the legal status of women and minorities have deteriorated. While religious minorities have been treated as second class citizens, barred from certain bureaucracies and universities, women's rights have been seriously curtailed by the establishment of Sharia laws (allowing polygamy and counting women's testimony as worth half that of men). At the same time, Iranian women enjoy a greater degree of political freedom than ever in the past. See, Haleh Esfandiari, "Iran, Women and Parliaments under Monarchy and Islamic Republic," in *Princeton Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1993), pp. 1-25.

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of the regime's large following, who have endured great sacrifices during the turmoils of the past two decades. The budding of a "religious fascism" among this segment of the population now threatens the liberalization of Iran.[121] A future "Lebanonization" of Iran cannot be ruled out. Ironically, the authority of Khomeini's successor potentially serves the democratization process as a bulwark against the religious trend and, hence, any premature offensive to bracket his role might have catastrophic consequences, lapsing the country back into another round of barbarism.

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121. To illustrate, during the Fall of 1995, a leading religious dissident, Abdul Karim Soroush, was repeatedly harrassed when delivering lectures at various universities, and a leading ayatollah, Ahmad Jannati, encouraged Khomeini's followers to take the law into their hands whenever there was a deviation from the "Imam's will," resulting in a number of arsons at Teheran's bookstores. Regarding Soroush, whatever the merits of his Shariati-style reformation, his disadvantage is that he has little or no background in political philosophy and, yet, has taken the lead against Valajati Faghih and the political role of the *ulama* in today's Iran, without bothering with the positive aspect of their role in filling the vacuum of a national elete.

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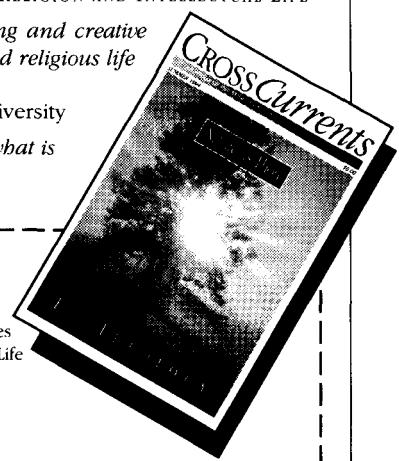

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White Americans as a Minority

Donald I. Warren

There is a specter haunting America: fear of the destruction of the majority culture embodied in the individualism and dominance of the white middle class. Such an apocryphal vision, first framed at the political fringe, has increasingly spread to the mainstream. In the process, conventional "liberal" vs. "conservative" cleavages have given way to "pluralist" versus "melting pot" concepts of American society, with the core majority becoming an embattled and increasingly powerless minority. This new understanding of problems of poverty, crime, education, governmental action — even artistic expression — defies the view of American society as tolerant, diverse, and optimistic about the future.[1]

While yet to coalesce into a movement, for two decades pockets of white Americans have been forming a loose web of anger in which establishment views of pluralist, secular social diversity have become anathema. In tracing the roots of this emergent identity, it is necessary to journey to the very edges of political respectibility, then trace it back to mainstream institutions. Despite being highly individualistic, more and more whites see themselves as a new minority. Thus, for a large and growing number of middle-class whites, *private fears are beginning to translate*

1. Two events in 1995 contributed to an intensification of this mood among whites: the "instant" not-guilty verdict in the Simpson case, soon followed by Farrakhan's "Million Man March" on Washington. *US News* (October 16, 1995) saw the O.J. verdict as revealing a pattern of racial polarization in terms of "black joy and white anger." *Time* (October 16, 1995) quoted chief Republican Party pollster Frank Luntz to the effect that, to "the white working class" the O.J. Simpson verdict is a form of "judicial affirmative action." *Newsweek* (October 16, 1995) referred to the trial's outcome as a "racial Rorschach" and reported that "white America felt a surge of outrage." In addition, a film released at the end of 1995 deals with the theme of whites becoming a powerless minority ("White Man's Burden").

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into public protest. This perceived erosion of the "core" of society obtaining among a group sharing little other than a sense of estrangement from their social milieu, coupled with a feeling of social isolation.

The experience of being a *majority displaced to minority status* generates a disquieting sense that the past has given way to an inferior present and an uncertain future. Many middle-class whites thus seem to be rejecting both conventional liberalism and economic conservatism — a combination that welds them into a populist cadre rejecting establishment politics: the Middle American Radicals (MARs).[2] By the early 1990s, this group had grown to form a groundswell of protest, best embodied in the presidential candidacy of H. Ross Perot and his continuing presence as a political force.

MARs accept elements of both the traditional Right and the traditional Left. They eschew collective action, because of their commitment to individualistic values, while demanding governmental protection of the middle-class. Already in 1976, MARs saw "an unholy alliance growing between the liberal and minority establishment at their expense. For them, the defects of social institutions — from the Church to labor unions and schools — are at the top: "leaders afraid to follow clear-cut rules, to enforce norms guaranteeing accountability to the 'little guy'." They see an abdication of authority in all major social institutions. The traditional modes of legitimate representation of their interests have betrayed them and are now in the hands of people who use these same structures to subvert the very values

2. I originally broached this theme in *The Radical Center: Middle Americans and the Politics of Alienation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976) in the wake of George Wallace's presidential campain, and foretold what, a quarter century later, was to result in the breakdown of the New Deal coalition of middle class whites with blacks and the poor. I first used the acronym MARs in an article in the August 17, 1974 issue of *The Nation*. Since then, the term has been employed extenslvely by, e.g., Kevin Phillips and Sam Francis. See Bob Whitaker, ed., *The New Right Papers* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982); Kevin Phillips' *Post-Conservative America* (New York: Random House, 1982); and *Boiling Point* (New York, Random House, 1993). In *The Conservative Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1988), Paul Gottfried and Thomas Fleming argue that Sam Francis used the term "MARs" to define the "Middle American Revolution" and the failure of the American political system. Allegedly, MARs subsequently became a key component in the presidential primary campaign of Pat Buchanan in the spring of 1992. In *Beautiful Losers* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993), Francis writes about the "failure of American Conservatism," identifing "MARs" as constituting the "political expression of an underlying social and cultural force" which formed the basis for the New Right of the 1980s and "continues to be valid today" (p. 9). In a feature article in the June 1992 issue, *New York* magazine called Ross Perot — when he was throttling political conventions — a "rescue fantasy" for a political constiteuency called "a new radical middle." "MARs" was also the subject of a September 25 1995 *Newsweek* article entitled "How to Capture the Radical Middle"; and Michael Lind addressed the same theme in his *New York Times Magazine* article of December 3, 1995 entitled "The Radical Center or the Moderate Middle?"

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around which their life has been built.[3] Thus MARs face a two-front threat: both from above and from below in the social order. Because of this predicament, their outlook cannot be entirely subsumed under the banner of either the Left or the Right. Rather than fitting any available stereotype of simplistic politics, MARs exhibit a political sophistication that has been overlooked and distorted by conventional academic and polling professionals.[4]

"Middle American Radicals" are not only a distinctive political interest group, they have also developed an ideology with its own interpretation of social problems and, therefore, of social action.[5] When traditional liberals deployed policies such as "affirmative action" and the "war on poverty,"

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3. The decline in allegiance both to the traditional Right and Left can be seen as the result of the failure of both perspectives to provide adequate accounts of social reality. Given the hackneyed spectrum of policy options, maybe the increasing sophistication of the eligible electorate rather than its "alienation" and "apathy" explains the declining levels of voting and a sense of betrayal and indifference toward conventional political debate. Evidence for this is the relatively greater decline in voting levels among the more highly educated segments of the electorate, rather than the apathy of its least informed and least educated members. See William Maddox and Stuart Lilie, *Beyond Liberal and Conservative* (Washington: The Cato Institute, 1984).

4. The alleged "turn to the Right" of the Reagan Era was fueled primarily by MARs. While the "social agenda" of school prayer and "super-patriotism" had some appeal, the key for Reagan's support among the angry middle income group was largely welfare reform and the abolition of affirmative action. By the mid-1980s, MARs seemed to melt back into the larger core of "Middle American Individualists," whom Herbert Gans characterized as "neither yuppies nor real-life equivalents of Archie and Edith Bunker." There were signs of restlessness during the 1988 Presidential elections, but they did not effect support for Republican politics. As Reagan appeared to lead the nation back from the emphasis on minority rights to the idea of open competition and "excellence," MARs attitudes began to merge with traditional Republican conservatism. What originally outraged MARs was a sense that the government in Washington had become a tool of alien values, lacking any legitimate base outside professional elites, experts and the Washington "special interests." In the 1980s, some MARs called themselves "populists," others simply "the silent majority."

5. In April 1990, *Time* ran a cover story entitled "Beyond the Melting Pot." A caption following this title stated: "In the 21st century — and that's not far off — racial and ethnic groups in the US will outnumber whites for the first time." This development was described as the "browning of America." "Such a development," the story continued, "will alter everything in society, from politics and education to industry, values and culture. . . . 1 American in 4 defines himself or herself as Hispanic or nonwhite." According to the magazine, at present "racial and ethnic conflict remains an ugly fact of American life everywhere, from working-class ghettos, to college campuses, and those who do not raise their fists often raise their voices over affirmative action and other power sharing." In the future, "even seemingly race-free conflicts will be increasingly complicated by an overlay of ethnic tension." *Time* proceeded to offer the rather timid prediction that "during the next decades many more mainstream white Americans will begin to speak openly about the nation they feel they are losing . . .White Americans are accustomed to thinking of themselves as the very picture of their nation . . . becoming a conspicuously multiracial society is bound to be a somewhat bumpy experience for many ordinary citizens."

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MARs rejected both, not merely because of economic considerations, but on more philosophical and political grounds. Thus they also rejected the traditional Right's individualistic explanations for social pathology. As the struggle between the traditional Right and the traditional Left waxed and waned in the 1970s and 1980s, MARs became increasingly aware that neither perspective related to the lives of "average whites," who found themselves experiencing social displacement akin to that of minority groups. In 1976, Jimmy Carter won the support of many disaffected "Middle Americans" by promising to curb Washington bureaucrats and restore responsiveness of government. It never happened. Subsequent disillusion with the Carter administration resulted in the disaffection of many independents and Democrats, who ushered in the 1980 Reagan Revolution.[6]

A fully developed exposition of the MAR viewpoint was first outlined by Wilmot Robertson in a racist, pseudo-scientific treatise which argued that the white, gentile majority in America is facing its own destruction and must recognize that it has become nothing more than a powerless minority in a society ruled by enemies of traditional American values and culture. In the forward, Robertson promises he can "supply members of this discomforted and threatened group . . . with an ideological diagnosis of the diseases and debilities which have laid them low and an ideological regimen for their recovery."[7] What he proposes is that: "The Majority will soon be out of limbo. There is nowhere for it to go but up — or all the way down. It is really a matter of timing, a race between the encroaching jungle and the ripening harvest . . . during the 1950s and 1960s, when the liberal-minority grip on the nation had tightened to a stranglehold, the Majority still could not believe it had become a people of little account in its own country. Most majority members still had a home, a late-model car and a loaded deep freeze. But they no longer had preachers and teachers to defend the Majority cause, no literature, no theatre, no press, no television, no forum

6. Ironically, this was first detected as a threat to liberalism by Stanley Greenberg, the coordinator of President Clinton's successful 1992 campaign. In *Middle Class Dreams* (New York: Times Books, 1995), Greenberg focuses on a critical county in Michigan, Macomb, where the "Reagan Republican" voter was first detected. Reviewing the situation in preparation for the 1996 presidential campaign, Greenberg focuses on the Perot voters as essentially the same group. Calling them "intensely antiestablishment," Greenberg poses the question of "whether the political system can accommodate these detached voters who both hate government and demand governmental action, who resent both political elites and economic elites." *Ibid.*, p. 259. Claiming it is the "Clinton solution" to "deliver accountable and activist government to working- and middle-class America," Greenberg describes "that contradiction" as "one of the principal dramas at the heart of our politics."

7. Wilmot Robertson (pseudonym), *The Dispossessed Majority* (Cape Canaveral, FL: Howard Allen Enterprises, 1972), p. xi.

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of expression. As its ascendancy had gradually, almost imperceptibly, been blotted out, the Majority had been transformed into a swarm of middle-class drones, still permitted certain physical comforts but carefully isolated and quarantined from the seats of decision-making and opinion-molding."[8]

Today MAR national surveys of two decades ago remain remarkably contemporary. One of the most commonly mentioned sources of white resentment is that they are accused of racism, while similar attitudes by black militants are seemingly condoned. This double standard follows from an assumption of tolerance toward the fears and concerns of racial minorities in terms of their victimization by the majority. In such a view, "racism" implies that hostility and social distancing by the "oppressed group" cannot be judged with the same standard used to judge the dominant majority. If this is an assumption generated by "liberal sociology," its intellectual root becomes precisely the sort of attack waged against the prevailing focus on ethnic pluralism. If "racism" cannot be a property of all individuals and groups — so the displaced majority argues — then *they* are being discriminated against, and are themselves victims of group prejudice.

Those who share the "displaced majority" perspective see themselves as constituting a new ethnic group: sharing a sense of past indignities, yet also celebrating a common heritage seen in danger of "assimilation" as a result of the political and social changes of the second half of the 20th century. From their "suburban ring" perspective, a certain fear of racial inundation persists, coupled with an occasional nostalgic claim to what has become almost a lost identity. This sense of having been displaced from their homeland and being forced to abandon what was rightfully theirs fits with the plight of suppressed ethnic identities around the globe.

Interviews with Middle Americans conducted in the early 1970s identified some of the main sources of social tensions. Accordingly, social pathologies were explained in terms of personal character flaws rather than as a result of the social system. Similarly, structural flaws were rejected as the causes of individual behavior but seen as the consequence of such pathologies. This account rejects the view that mere reform of the social system will alleviate injustice and social problems, and sees personal char-

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8. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 531. A pervasive theme in the ideological litany of the "dispossessed" is the group's failure to protect itself: "The successful can afford to share their success, and the Majority did so with indiscriminate prodigality. With no qualifications or conditions, the laboriously accumulated privileges of Majority institutions were distributed gratis to members of other races and cultures who accepted them almost as a matter of course." *Ibid.*, 533.

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acter as having the major impact.[9] Such a view readily fits with both traditional Right and traditional Left accounts. According to the former, *individual* defects explain behavior, while according to the latter, behavior is essentially a function of *system* defects. How did the majority become displaced, when at mid-century it appeared to be celebrating its triumph as society's backbone? The easy answer to this question lies with the issue of race relations and the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement as the wedge by which a moral flaw was elevated to the center stage, so that only members of racial minorities could claim any legitimate "moral character."[10] But the real cause for the reduction of the white majority to the status of a relatively powerless minority — in moral if not economic or

9. See Andrew Greeley, *Why Can't They Be Like Us?* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1971). Following Tönnies, Weber and Francis, Greely argues for the "primordial" basis of ethnicity as the informal versus the formal institutional matrix of industrial society. Stressing an essentially defensive basis of ethnic identity, he speaks of "blood . . . intimately related to belief . . . that is threatened by some strange outsider invader," and of ethnics caught "between a powerful loyalty to the US and deep insecurities about whether they are even now accepted by the Republic" (p. 153). Committed to "family, home and neighborhood in a fashion that those of use who are part of the cosmopolitan elite find very difficult to understand," Greeley claims that "the failure of the liberal elites to understand, much less to have compassion for this reaction, is the greatest single proof of their snobbishness with regard white ethnics," resulting in a dismissal of their concerns about neighborhood change as "white ethnic racism." Rather than seeing a single group replacing a traditional "dominant ethnic minority," many whites perceive an unholy alliance of virtually any ethnic, religious, sexual preference or other minority group that is visible and organized forming a new majority. Moreover, the separation between a paranoid and politically extremist definition of this situation and a more "middle of the road" view is the degree to which various "minorities" are seen to be unified and fed by behind-the-scene manipulators, such as "reds, Jews, liberal bureaucrats, secular humanists," or just opportunistic politicians. Those comprising this "displaced majority" may have been part of one or another European ethno-religious group. Their loss of close ethnic community ties has been replaced by what Gans calls "symbolic ethnicity." See Herbert Gans, *Middle American Individualism: The Future of Liberal Democracy* (New York: The Free Press, 1988). According to Lieberson, others have submerged their origins within a powerful "unhyphenated American" identity, thus successfully merging into the "melting pot" of the cultural majority. See Stanley Lieberson, "Unhyphenated Whites in the United States," in Richard D. Alba, ed., *Ethnicity and Race in the U.S.A.* (London: Routledge, 1988). For those sharing such an identity, the demographic trends of recent decades pose a threat to the existig consensus.

10. The colloquial dictum, "If you're white you can't be right," carried a message of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, which some social observers note has created a "culture of guilt." For the "displaced majority," then, there is a sense of not only lost dominance but failed morality. In his discussion of the "joys of Victimhood," Joseph Epstein (*New York Times Magazine*, July 2, 1989) offers a popular culture cammentary in which many whites see themselves isolated from the "Victim coalition," i.e., the new center of cultural discourse. There is no consensus among white middle American as to which new dominant minorities compose the coalition arrayed against them, whether it is intentional or not, or if it is just a creation of expedient politicians.

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political terms — must be sought in the linkage of victim status to the claims for governmental protection.

As long as liberalism employed weakness and injustice as the basis for the expansion of services and the protection against economic risk, middle-class whites ended up absorbing the costs of social change that the elites and the poor were not asked to bear. That one-sided bargain stuck in the wake of the growing power of minorities (aided by the affluent upper middle-class in the 1960s and 1970s) and resulted in the breakup of the New Deal coalition and the spurious claim of conservatives to political power in the 1980s.

A critical dimension in the displaced majority's new minority status is the lack of institutional representation in organizations such as churches and labor unions, which hitherto provided the basis of their sense of power and community. They suddenly found themselves as strangers in their own land, experiencing the same culture shock as newly arrived immigrants. Given this state of social isolation and anomie, they have begun to build new organizational bases to defend their interests, such as local and now national political talk radio. Media developments have grown apace with the plight of voiceless middle-class radicals. Even more evident than the decline in commitment to both major political parties has been the distrust of conventional mass media and the increasing role a populist oppositional role for figures such as Rush Limbaugh, earlier Morton Downey Jr, and a multitude of local political talk show hosts found in cities across the country. Abandoned by both liberal and conservative elites "within the Beltway," the displaced majority has found its voice in a kind of "sixth estate," whose influence over the establishment has grown over the past two decades.

In the late 1970s, a fringe political party emerged, which embodied the key ideas of the "Dispossessed majority" — the Populist Party. Although polling only 75,000 votes in the 1988 Presidential election, this organization reflects the most extremist, anti-Semitic fringes of American politics. Its presidential candidate in 1988 was David Duke — a former leader of the Klu Klux Klan and of the "National Socialist White People's Party," who gained national attention when he succeeded in winning a seat in the Louisiana state legislature. The party's official publication, *The Populist Observer*, provides a concise assessment of today's "malaise": "Silent Majority Fast Becoming Silent Minority": "The most important thing to remember is that the System is fighting and winning a war of demographics. Every day more people become dependent on the largesse of Big Brother. Every day, more White women give birth to nonwhite babies, and every day millions of intelligent, well-bred White women continue their rat-like rush up the corporate ladder, while would-be families are never created.

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America's collective character is becoming that of a Third World Nation."[11] In July 1989, a regular column entitled "Safety Valve," in Wilmot Robertson's monthly publication, *Instauration* (Greek, meaning restoration), contained a reader's lament that "the only acceptable and media-approved racism these days is directed against the white race." This "liberal establishment dogma" expouses "that there are no racial differences. If Haiti and Mozambique are miserable, it cannot be due to any inferiority on the part of their inhabitants . . . It must be, it has to be, the white, and in this lies the curious subterranean logic of antiwhite racism."

There seems to be a growing sense that some line must be drawn, so the very core of the society is protected. The issues confronting the displaced majority are clearly political. A racial consciousness among significant numbers of whites provides the basis for describing them as a "new ethnic group." Detached from any traditional heritage other than being "Americans," these individuals constitute the vanguard of resistance to cultural or political pluralism. These "unhyphenated" whites form a diffuse political force whose aversion to group action makes them appear as less than a coherent power block. Yet, as demonstrated in the candidacy of George Wallace in the 1970s, of a David Duke in the late 1980s, and in their growing disaffection with the Democratic party, this constituency may be the key to the future direction of social policies.

The test of the US' integrative capacity will lie not with its ability to respond to minority group demands but with whether the "displaced majority" perspective will become part of mainstream politics and cultural mobilization, resulting in the rejection of a multiracial demographic reality and the development of a society of separatist enclaves. Such a trend may already be discerned in major urban areas with the growing "escape" of much of the white population.

The cultural and political dynamics noted for the US are paralleled by developments in both Western and Eastern Europe. So-called protest or populist parties have gained significant strength in Austria, Sweden, France, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Norway, Belgium and Italy, as well as in several former East Bloc nations. Since the demise of the Soviet Union, dramatic pressures on Western Europe in terms of "economic refugee" invasions, coupled with questions of preserving national cultural identities in the face of the "Americanization" of popular culture, have had a profound impact in generating "displaced majority" anxieties. These new problems are likely to redefine the political landscape in the 21st century on both sides of the Atlantic.

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11. *The Populist Observer* (July 1989), p. 10

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The Disappearance of Blonds: Immigration, Race and the Reemergence of "Thinking White"

Joseph W. Bendersky

I listened in amazement as the man related a disturbing tale of his recent trip to New York. Indeed, I hardly recognized the city and its people I thought I knew so well. Yet, what he said sounded so eerily familiar. Above all, it was his specific emphasis on "blondness" and his self-conscious identity of its centrality that particularly captured my attention and shook my historical memory. Although this average well educated professional from another part of the country had taken his family on a tour to experience the wonders of the Big Apple, upon their arrival they sensed immediately not only alienation and otherness but outright danger that apparently overwhelmed everything else.

This went far beyond mere culture shock and the inability to deal with the awesome size or speed of the city; nor even had some specific unfortunate incident occurred. Their trepidation stemmed from preconditioned racial expectations, reinforced by cautions they supposedly received from a friendly type upon their arrival. As recounted, someone had warned them that their very "blondness" placed them in imminent peril; by their very nature, they stood out as targets — to be pushed into traffic or onto subway tracks or otherwise become victims of unspecified actions against them. Apparently, friend-enemy distinctions followed color lines; and they were a minority intruding into the hostile territory of the darker majority. This was not, however, yet another instance of the racial divide between suburban white America and urban African-American society.

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Instead, all shades of non-whites inhabiting this cosmopolitan city seemed to converge to make them feel outsiders in their own land. It was as if the entire non-white world stood aligned against them.

Had they actually looked, they would, of course, have noticed countless blonds and other white New Yorkers pleasantly going about their business in relative safety. But anxiety and preconceived notions evidently prevented these visitors from penetrating beyond the masses of those who were different; there existed little chance of acquiring any understanding of the city and its diverse population. And, without hesitation, those listening to this tale of the perils of ethnic urban America expressed agreement with its accuracy and meaning.

That average people would make such a self-conscious identification between "blondness" and "white," and then juxtapose this identity against what they perceived as the dangerous darker alien masses of big cities was neither new nor surprising. Though perhaps specific references to blondness (even as a metaphor for white) have disappeared from general discourse in recent decades, these paradigmatic associations had long historical and theoretical roots in American culture. In the vague and amorphous expressions of blondness and whiteness, as well as in unspoken sentiments and fears, we are again witnessing a resurgence in the 1990s of a kind of thought that emerged almost a century ago among elite racial theorists. Although contemporary Americans no longer read these writers, and would vigorously protest any link with racial theories associated with despised Nazis abroad and disreputable white supremacists at home, such ideas had long permeated mainstream American culture. In the past, they had significantly affected American immigration policy until the 1960's, and, in the near future, probably will affect immigration legislation looming on the political horizon.[1]

The catastrophic consequences of the "disappearance of blondes" for America, as well as Western civilization itself, had been a persistent theme among prominent American Social Darwinists and racial thinkers in the early 20th century. At that time, the scientific classification of "white" and

1. Dynamic socio-economic forces causing tremendous transformations, dislocation, and disintegration at so many levels of contemporary American society have coincided chronologically with the deterioration of America's cities and three decades of the most ethnically and racially diverse mass immigration in U.S. history. Together these have opened the way for a strong resurgence of what had formerly been nativism, but in contemporary parlance is usually referred to as white backlash, or, more recently, "White Identity." While recognizing the self-evident importance of structural economic and social changes, this article focuses on the racial ideas and theories deeply embedded in American history yet often forgotten or eschewed in current debates.

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the collateral fretting over the emergence of serious threats to this unique and essential racial group focused primarily on Europeans. Despite other major concerns about Asians and Africans, these races were almost by definition excluded from this particular debate. Considered so racially disparate, they appeared beyond the pale of discussion. Prejudice and taboos against non-Europeans were so virulent that one could find little resistance to racial segregation or anti-miscegenation laws to protect the purity of white America from African-Americans or opposition to the various types of nativist restrictionist legislation that essentially cut off Asian immigration into the country. The very thought of interbreeding with non-white races met with virtual universal condemnation. As General Leonard Wood wrote to Theodore Roosevelt in 1905: "we have enough national weakness and humiliation from the Negro to avoid further trouble by the introduction of races [i.e. Asians] with which we can never mingle." America must remain a "white man's country," if we are not to turn into a "breed of mongrels."[2]

On this entire question, William Ripley's meticulously documented 600 page study *The Races of Europe* had a powerful impact. A professor of economics and sociology at MIT, who also lectured on anthropology at Columbia University, Ripley espoused the theory that Europeans actually constituted three distinct racial types rather than one race with diverse cultures. Each could be identified through scientific craniology using a cephalic index measuring ratios of breadth to length of a scull. Long-headed dolichocephalic types, constituting the Teutonic or Nordic race of northern Europe, were tall, light skinned, light haired with long faces and narrow noses. The short stocky, broad faced, round headed brachycephalic race included southern Germans, Slavs, and Celts, whereas the mesocephalic types were a Mediterranean race with long heads but dark skin and hair. Ripley's hefty volume, replete with photographs of carefully measured human skulls, graphs of the cephalic index of MIT students, maps of worldwide race distributions, sketches of racial types, and a vast array of contemporary scientific scholarship created the overall contours of a picture of the apparent racial reality of the Western world. For decades to come, the components and overall vision of Ripley's book were widely accepted as scientific gospel.[3]

Among the popularizers of such views, Major Charles E. Woodruff

2. Richard C. Brown, *Social Attitudes of American Generals, 1898-1940* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), p. 186.

3. William Z. Ripley, *The Races of Europe: A Sociological Study* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1899). John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), pp. 154-155.

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held a place of distinction. This army surgeon wrote extensively on subjects such as *The Effects of Tropical Light on White Men* and *The Evolution of the Small Brain of Civilized Man*. In his lengthy *magnum opus*, *The Expansion of Races* (1909), he expounded a grand theory of human development rivaling in tone and anthropological breadth the master works of Social Darwinism. As he humbly remarked in the preface, "it merely applies to man the natural laws which are known to govern the spread of all other species of plant or animal." Writing in the chilling, stark scientific style of the laboratory, Woodruff told a grim tale without "right or wrong." He refused "to hide the awful brutality, suffering, poverty and mortality which have been part and parcel of man's evolution to the present point in which modern civilization makes the suffering of a new kind." A cruel natural world had forced man, like all living organisms, into a ceaseless "struggle for existence" according to the governing law of "survival of the fittest."[4]

"Man began his existence by murder of competitors," he wrote, "and has continued it ever since, if not one way then in another." Ancient wars were wars for the total physical "extermination of competitors;" and war had not disappeared in the modern world, because "the real basis of war — overpopulation" remains a constant, inescapable fact of life. Moreover, war still facilitated the natural selection of the fittest within a given population: "The stag engages in personal combat every autumn and the best fighters survive, the worst are ruthlessly killed. This survival of the best fighters produces warriors by instinct. . . . [And there is] inconsistency in advocating that man should and could repress his nature inherited from untold thousands of ancestors."[5]

When Woodruff applied these naturalistic arguments to the "relationships of higher and lower races of man," he did so as the dogmatic champion of Nordic supremacy. His scientific explanation for the evolution of different races involved the "effects of tropical light" on the "cell protoplasm" on men living within geographically distinct "zoological zones" for which each was specifically suited by nature. "This evolution of blondness," he wrote, "required a cold, dark, northern country — probably a cloudy, rainy, misty, forest country — the exact conditions needed for the evolution of the brain by natural selection."[6]

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4. Charles E. Woodruff, *Expansion of Races* (New York: Rebman Co, 1909), pp. 132-133.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 118-129.

6. Charles E. Woodruff, *The Effects of Tropical Light on White Men* (New York: Rebman Co., 1905).

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Within this specific "zoological zone" evolved a tall, blond, superior northern European race — the Nordics — who were responsible for all advanced civilizations. The source of American culture and greatness, these higher beings still constituted the country's best leadership and its warrior class. Nevertheless, Nordics could achieve such heights only by exploiting the lower races of Alpines and Mediterraneans who evolved in other "zoological zones" and whose natural inclination for manual labor or trade were cultivated by the Nordics. Throughout history, these Alpine and Mediterranean breeds had, in return, enjoyed some of the benefits of higher Nordic civilization which they otherwise would never have known. "All lower races in civilization," he stated, "are actually a species of animal under domestication, increased in number hugely by the sanitation forced upon them and kept up by the Aryans."[7]

Of course, like many of his era, Woodruff also felt compelled to address the apparent bleak, though inescapable, "evidence as to the deterioration of Northern European types in America." The disappearance of the "blond type" and its replacement by "broad-headed Alpines" and dark skinned Mediterraneans could only be prevented by a continual influx of immigrants from northern Europe to replenish the Nordic stock, and by precluding any inbreeding with the lower European races. He cited recent eugenic and biological studies to highlight the dangers of the "melting pot" concept and to emphasize that "the history of civilization shows that racial stocks are never mixed with profit."[8]

In fleshing out the fundamental outlines of this racial mosaic, Woodruff was soon joined by Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard, two of the most influential racist publicists of the twentieth century. Grant's interests and activities exemplified the intermixture of natural science and historical consciousness that characterized the Social Darwinism of the day. A wealthy member of New York's most exclusive Park Avenue social elite, he wrote American history, pursued genealogy, and belonged to the Society of Colonial Wars, while also being a skilled hunter, amateur naturalist, and chairman of the New York Zoological Society. Far more prolific than Grant, Stoddard had the zeal of an intellectual crusader and attracted a broader readership for a longer period of time, publishing some twenty books and numerous articles for *Colliers*, *Forum*, and *The Saturday Evening Post*. Too often dismissed as a mere fringe theorist, this well-connected Harvard Ph.D. and lawyer retained public respect until America's

7. Woodruff, *Expansion of Races*, pp. 268-271 and 379-387.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-273

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war against Nazism created a climate less receptive to such racist ideas.[9]

Their books certainly had foreboding titles: *The Passing of the Great Race, The Rising Tide of Color against White-World Supremacy* and *The Revolt against Civilization: The Menace of the Under-Man*. Relying upon arguments of "natural selection," "survival of the fittest," and "the supreme importance of heredity," they declared the Nordics as the racial "backbone of western civilization." The Nordic was the "purely European type . . . . the *Homo europaeus*, the white man par excellence . . . [with] blondness, wavy hair, blue eyes, fair skin, high, narrow and straight nose, which are associated with great stature, and a long skull, as well as with abundant head and body hair." And "if this great race, with its capacity for leadership and fighting, should ultimately pass, with it would pass that which we call civilization. It would be succeeded by an unstable and bastardized population, where . . . a new and darker age would blot out our racial inheritance."[10]

Together, Grant, Stoddard, and Woodruff told a gripping tale of epic proportions, constituting nothing less in scope than a racist history of the world. In their historical epic, the Nordic race appeared on the grasslands of eastern Europe and central Asia approximately two to three thousand years ago, spreading to Greece and India, whose people and great civilizations were both Nordic in origin. Over centuries of brutal warfare, the Nordics were driven out of these lands and toward Western Europe by the numerically superior hordes of their perennial foe, the Mongoloid races of Asia. In the process, race mixing with Mongoloids on the frontier bastardized many Nordics, thus creating the Slavic races of eastern Europe and Russia. Ripley's Alpine and Mediterranean races were likewise identified as "western extensions of Asiatic subspecies, and neither of them can be considered as exclusively European."

During the Middle Ages, Charlemagne abated this Asiatic onslaught through his Christian Empire, "the nucleus of the civilized world of today." On its eastern and southern frontiers, this Holy Roman Emperor erected buffer zones as ramparts against further Asiatic incursions. The culturally "Nordicized" Alpines, Mediterraneans, and Slavs who inhabited the buffer regions benefitted from the advancements of superior Nordic civilization that they could borrow but never create by themselves.

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9. Thomas F. Gossett, *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1963), pp. 356-359, 394-398.

10. Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color against White World Supremacy* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920), pp. xiv-xxx, 305; and *The Revolt against Civilization: The Menace of the Under-Man* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1922). Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1916), pp. 150-165, 197.

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Nonetheless, owing to centuries of constant pressures from various competing races, the "pure Nordic race," suffering substantial demographic reduction, was eventually pushed back geographically to the fringe coastline areas of northern Europe and England.[11]

By the modern world, "natural selection" allowed the great Nordic race to reverse this historical trend, as it once again spread out and acquired world domination through its overseas empires. The severity of medieval life and centuries of attacks by "brown-yellow" races had hardened the Nordics, ensuring only the fittest and superior among them would survive. Consequently, the "white man," already possessing "inherent racial aptitudes," "could think, could create, could fight superlatively well." Was it so surprising, then, that "redskins and negroes feared and adored him as a god, while the somnolent races of the Farther East, stunned by this strange apparition rising from the pathless ocean, offered no effective opposition." Since "the Nordics are, all over the world, a race of soldiers, sailors, adventurers, and explorers, but above all, of rulers, organizers, and aristocrats," they were well suited for the maritime pursuits driving such conquests and empire building. "For four hundred years the pace never slackened, and at the close of the nineteenth century the white man stood indubitable master of the world."[12]

The conquest of the New World and establishment of the US by "Protestant Nordics" stood out prominently among the key chapters of this racial epic. "The Indians had been ruthlessly swept aside, since "a few hunting tribes could not be allowed to possess a continent," and a truly great and unique American civilization reached its zenith by the late nineteenth century. Ever since, however, this higher civilization had been seriously threatened by the "rising tide of color." Motivated by illusory ideas of racial equality and democracy and a lust for the material advantages of advanced civilization, the non-white races (and inferior white races) started expanding and revolting just as the great Nordic race was again in decline. They were also motivated by pure race envy and jealousy, illustrated by the fact that since time immemorial "members of the colored races, or even dark-skinned members of the Nordic race regard[ed] the possession of a blonde women as an assertion and proof of racial equality."[13]

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11. *Ibid.*; Woodruff, *Tropical Light*, pp. 129-134, 159-164, 224-250.
12. Grant, *Great Race*, p. 198; Stoddard, *Rising Tide*, pp. 148-149. Woodruff, *Tropical Light*, pp. 165-168, 252-267.
13. Madison Grant, *The Conquest of a Continent or the Expansion of Races in America* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1933), pp. 14-16.

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America's "altruistic ideals," especially the extension of democratic egalitarian principles to inferior races, facilitated the country's demise. And that "absurd fallacy" — the melting-pot — accelerated that disastrous consequence by lowering the higher races forever rather than elevating the inferior ones. "The offspring [of miscegenation] is a mongrel — a walking chaos, so consumed by his jarring heredities that he is quite worthless. We have already viewed the mongrel and his works in Latin America." Now, the US, too, was being swept "toward a racial abyss." Soon the descendants of the original colonists would be "as extinct as the Athenian in the age of Pericles, and the Viking in the days of Rollo."[14]

When urbanization was added to the equation, it touched a nerve among those already alarmed by assimilationist, melting-pot philosophies and who looked with dread upon America's big cities. Grant, Stoddard, and Woodruff claimed that everywhere Nordics suffered depletion through war, low birth-rate, interbreeding and urbanization. An adventurous class of explorers, pioneers, and warriors, Nordics were first to fight and lead; thus the "big blond fighting man" sustained greater proportional losses. Also, as a "high standard" man, the Nordic requires "healthful living conditions, and quickly pines when deprived of good food, fresh air, and exercise," all of which were denied him as the rural agrarian society in which he naturally thrived gave way to the oppressive living conditions of industrialization and congested urban existence. In America, the Nordic was being replaced by the short dark Mediterranean and Slavic-Alpine races better suited genetically for such a low standard of existence. Consequently, "the Nordic native American has been crowded out with amazing rapidity by these swarming, prolific aliens, and after two short generations he has in many urban areas become almost extinct."[15]

The emotional intensity of such feelings was vividly displayed in *Old World in the New* by Edward Alsworth Ross, a University of Wisconsin sociology professor and leading advocate for immigration restriction. Published in 1913, his influential book attempted in word and picture to depict a coming catastrophe of an America overrun by racially inferior people. Americans faced the prospect of race "extinctions" comparable to that which caused the fall of ancient Rome.

Discussing "American Blood and Immigrant Blood," Ross claimed

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14. *Ibid.*, pp. ix, 15, 222-227; and Grant, *Great Race*, *op. cit.*, p. 228; Stoddard, *Rising Tide*, *op. cit.*, pp. xxix-xxxi; 145-149.

15. Grant, *Great Race*, *op. cit.*, pp. 86, 166; Stoddard, *Rising Tide*, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155, 162-167. Woodruff, *Tropical Light*, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-300.

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that the higher type of Northern European stock produced the true American "pioneering breed," known for its strength, beauty and character, whereas recent immigrants were "oxlike men, . . . descendants of those who always stayed behind." Clearly inferior, the latter had narrow, slopping foreheads and small crania ("the average Hebrew woman in New York is just over five feet.") "In every face there was something wrong . . . so many sugar-loafed heads, moon-faces, slit mouths, lantern-jaws, and goosebill noses that one might imagine a malicious jinn had amused himself by casting human beings in a set of skew-molds discarded by the Creator." Indeed, since these immigrants were so downright "ugly," they threatened the natural "good looks of the American people."[16]

Although concerned with all lower-race immigration, Ross, like many other racists, paid particular attention to Jews. He conveyed a menacing specter of throngs of illiterate Jews whose "Ghetto life . . . bred in them a herding instinct." The very "inborn love of money-making [that] leads them to crowd into the smallest quarters" left little hope they would ever, or could ever, move out of the squalled congested urban slums of the big cities into which poured each wave of immigrants. It was a self-imposed "hideous nightmare of dirt, disease, and poverty," spawning countless social ills burdening the rest of the country. Reaching "here moral cripples, ... [with] a monstrous and repulsive love of gain, . . . they rapidly push up into a position of prosperous parasitism." And they contribute more than their fair share to the moral decline of the big cities. "The murders, hold-ups and burglaries committed in the Jewish section by Jewish criminals" underscores that "with his clear brain sharpened in the American school, the egoistic, conscienceless young Jew constitutes a menace."[17]

Ross described the northern "blond" type from whom Americans stemmed as morally superior "truthtellers" possessing an "innate ethical endowment." But among other things, the "nimble lying of the southern races" shows "the Mediterranean peoples are morally below the races of northern Europe." And he sharply contrasted the honest, fair-minded, self-sacrificing American, with the "keen-witted Jews" and their "subtle Hebrew brains" who can always "scent a profit." As Ross saw it, "you can't make boy scouts out of the Jews."[18]

Ross provided illustrative photographs of black-suited eastern and

16. Edward A. Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People* (New York: Century Co., 1914), pp. 282-292.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 146-157.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-149, 290-293.

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southern European men at Ellis Island, with morose faces, sullen eyes, and huge dark beards. To the purist, or to those Americans living outside major urban centers who would never see such immigrants, these pictures indeed conveyed the image of totally alien, mysterious, and inferior, though no less insidious, beings incompatible with Americans and their way of life. He further enhanced the effect with maps detailing how these inferior aliens were forcing the "native white stock" out of the very eastern states that had constituted the original thirteen colonies.[19]

To arrest this decay, these theorists long favored a racist political agenda to avert miscegenation and terminate lower-race immigration. And it was a call echoed outside the urban industrial north. In 1908, for example, Virginia's Senate passed a resolution opposing immigration into the state of Italians with "their Mafia and Black Hand murder societies, and with no characteristics to make them, with us, a homogeneous people, believing as we do, that upon Anglo-Saxon supremacy depend the future welfare and prosperity of this Commonwealth."[20] Nevertheless, so long as industrial America's insatiable thirst for labor remained unquenched before WWI, these racial arguments were never powerful enough to close the gates to immigration. Restrictionists watched in horror as the great eastern cities of the original Anglo-Saxon colonists filled with shorter, darker southern and eastern Europeans who flowed into America by the millions in the decades preceding WWI.

It took the xenophobia stimulated by that war, together with fear of foreign subversion during the Red Scare and massive unemployment during the postwar depression of 1920, to create a political atmosphere in which racial theorists could achieve success. Within the dynamics of these changed circumstances, racial ideology, emotions, and powerful economic interests combined to sweep new immigration legislation through Congress. While the American Federation of Labor lobbied against cheap immigrant labor, rightist groups such as the American Legion championed the cause of ethnic nationalism to protect and preserve America's "identity" as a racially homogeneous nation. Racial ideologues had finally found a forum in the halls of Congress, where restrictionist legislators quickly grasped onto such ideas to advance their own immigration goals.[21]

Congressmen and a parade of witnesses condemned immigrants from

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-289.
20. *Virginia Senate Journal*, No. 41 (February 14, 1908).
21. Robert A. Divine, *American Immigration Policy, 1924-1952* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 5-9. Higham, *American Nativism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-263, 300-311.

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eastern and southern Europe as "undesirables" of the "decidedly inferior type, physically, mentally, and morally." Since these immigrants were "filthy and ignorant and the majority are verminous," it was "impossible to overestimate the peril." Congregating in overcrowded city slums, these undesirables also threatened society by breeding crime, straining social services, and fomenting radicalism (even Bolshevism). Such beings certainly could not be assimilated through the melting pot without a cataclysmic degeneration of the native stock.[22]

Thus, in 1921, the country instituted its first national quota system temporarily legislating not only substantially reduced numbers of immigrants but drawing sharp racial distinctions among them. While limiting those from eastern and southern Europe, this racial quota system reserved most slots for northwestern Europeans. In the process, racial fears had been so deeply embedded in the public mind that they retained their vibrancy even after the economic and political conditions that had originally engendered this legislation had vanished. Racial arguments proved potent enough to sustain the passage of permanent immigration restriction even in the time of political stability and economic prosperity that followed.[23]

In the years leading up to the passage of a permanent bill in 1924, the advocates of Nordic racial supremacy moved into the center of the political stage. A kind of "racist brain trust," including Grant, Stoddard, and renowned eugenicists, played a prominent role not only in sustaining pressure for restrictionist legislation but in the actual design of it. While testifying publicly as detached expert witnesses, these men, at the same time, secretly worked closely on various drafts with Representative Albert Johnson, who was spearheading the legislation through Congress.[24]

By this point, yet another layer of supposed scientific validation had strengthened the cause, one connected with such reputable institutions as the US Army and prestigious universities. In 1923, the Princeton Psychologist, Carl Brigham published *A Study of American Intelligence*, based upon the results of the intelligence tests prominent American psychologists administered to hundreds of thousands of draftees. These data appeared to provide irrefutable scientific proof that the Nordic race had inherently superior intelligence, while the IQ's for the eastern and southern European races were greatly deficient. Brigham personally brought these

22. Congress, House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Temporary Suspension of Immigration*, report, 66th Cong., 3d sess., 1920, pp. 3-11.
23. Higham, *American Nativism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-311.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 312-316.

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test results to the attention of Congressman Johnson, while others presented them authoritatively before both houses of Congress.[25]

Most influential in rallying widespread public support was the novelist Kenneth Roberts, who wrote nineteen articles on immigration for the *Saturday Evening Post*, which kept the issue in the public eye after 1921. Publishing these in book form just in time for the campaign to restrict immigration permanently, he, too, juxtaposed the epic of "tall, blond, adventurous" Nordic pioneers building America into a great nation against the backdrop of dangerous "immigrant inundations that submerged, mongrelized and wrecked the great nations and civilizations of the past." His descriptions of Ghettos were unmistakably intended to conjure up images of "a den of wild beasts;" "the stench which rose from the struggling, squirming bodies was sickening." The book version reinforced these disparaging images through photographs of wretched looking men dressed in rags destined for America. The caption read: "The best type of Jewish emigrants from Poland . . . holding their United States visas."[26]

Month after month, Americans across the country, most of them far removed from the immigration scene of the large eastern cities, had the immigration question thrust upon them through Roberts' graphic style and alarmist message. As the most widely read magazine in America, with a circulation of over two million, the *Saturday Evening Post* had, through its patronage of Roberts and its nativist editorial policy, become a very effective weapon in the restrictionist arsenal.[27] Through their publications and testimony, this racist intelligentsia helped persuade large segments of the public and the Congress that the new legislation was imperative to the survival of American civilization.

Meanwhile, the American Legion added to the momentum by a national lobbying campaign. About to emerge as one of America's most respected and powerful institutions, the Legion had long identified Bolshevism with inferior alien races. Since 1919, it had fought a tenacious political battle for 100% Americanism and against alien influences and the immigration of "undesirables." Through publications like *The American Legion Weekly*, *Annual Reports*, and newspaper articles, the Legion organized a vigorous, systematic effort over a period of years to rally the country and

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25. Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Knopf, 1985), pp. 79-83, 129-130.

26. Kenneth Roberts, *Why Europe Leaves Home* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1922), pp. 13-18.

27. Higham, *American Nativism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 262, 265, 271, 273, 316.

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Congress to action. It published articles such as "Is Immigrant Labor Really Cheap?" and "The Price We Pay," by Edwin Conklin, a Princeton biology professor, who warned legionnaires about the damage caused by America's historic search for "cheap labor." The first attempt — the importation of "Negro slaves" — cost a bloody civil war and has bequeathed "a racial problem that can never be solved short of amalgamation or extermination." Had the second effort — "millions of Orientals" — not been suspended, the "high level of white civilization" would have been lost as America, in the words of Theodore Roosevelt, became "Chinafied." With the influx of eastern and southern European immigrants, he argued, we are again "deciding the fate of America as no enemy can ever decide." For the "curse of cheap labor" and the "menace of mankind" is the "lowered hereditary qualities" in intelligence and morality embodied in these immigrants. They were responsible for dramatic rises in crime, insanity, poverty, and "backward school children" plaguing America's cities and taxing their social resources. Any economic gain would be "temporary and trivial" compared to the biological loss to the country's racial future. "If we debase the heredity of our people by admixture with inferior stock we commit the unpardonable sin for which there is no atonement."[28]

In this way, the American Legion brought the message of the racial intelligentsia directly into the homes and local lodges of its members and their families. These media efforts, together with fiery speeches at national conventions and local meetings, further intensified this campaign, as did testimony before Congress and direct lobbying of politicians. With over 300,000 members functioning within a national network and united solidly behind a single issue, the Legion wielded considerable political force.[29]

When American Jewish organizations and liberal groups attacked the racist premises of this legislation and appealed to the country's sense of democratic equality and fairness, restrictionists suddenly and hypocritically denied race was ever an issue or that they favored any "particular type of immigrant." Just a few months before, however, Johnson himself had written that the "fundamental reason . . . is biological" and not economic. "We are infinitely more careful," he wrote, "in the selection of the animals which we import for breeding purposes than we are in the selection of our incoming aliens. . . . No abnormal or diseased animal is allowed to mix its

28. Edwin Grant Conklin, "Is Immigrant Labor Really Cheap?" and "The Price We Pay," *American Legion Weekly* (July 20, 1923), pp. 5-6, (August 3, 1923), pp. 3-4, 20.

29. Higham, *American Nativism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 224, 256, 313. Divine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-8.

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blood with that of our breeding stock. . . . An animal is an unfit animal, whether it be a man or woman, horse or sheep. Bonds are powerless to make a fit American father or mother out of a feeble-minded alien." The new legislation, he stated, "aims to . . . cut down the numbers of aliens . . . from southern and eastern Europe. In other words, it is recognized that . . . northern and western Europe furnish the best material for citizenship."[30]

Nonetheless, Congress felt the need to at least pay lip service to the country's self-image of democratic equality and humanitarian idealism. Instead of honestly identifying specific ethnic groups for reduction on racial grounds, the restrictionists devised a general quota system, which, though maintaining a semblance of fairness and rationality, actually favored northwestern Europeans and drastically cut immigration from eastern and southern Europe. The 1924 Act limited total European immigration to 150,000 per year allocated proportionally to the percentage of a nationality in the US in 1890 (i.e., before most of the new immigration). In effect, about 70% of the quota was reserved for those of Nordic origin, and soon immigration of the so-called inferior races dropped from its height of hundreds of thousands to less than 15,000 per year.[31] America's Nordic heritage and blond complexion had been preserved; it remained the country for the right kind of whites.

With the onset of the Great Depression, formidable concrete economic factors regained primacy in the immigration debate. The cheap labor issue had vanished, while the hardships, destitution, and anxieties caused by massive unemployment, widespread poverty, and fears of economic collapse created an atmosphere generally hostile to outsiders. It was a mood soon reinforced by fears of communist and Nazi subversion that reached their height during the Fifth Column hysteria accompanying the outbreak of war in Europe.[32]

Still, arguments about America's racial make-up retained their potency. General xenophobia, depression era fears of additional joblessness or expanding relief rolls, a strong sense that charity begins at home, together with apathy and callousness to the sufferings of strangers in a far away place, only partially explained the American attitude. For when America had to reconsider its restrictive immigration laws in light of the

30. Albert Johnson, "Immigration, a Legislative Point of View," *Nation's Business*, XI (July 1923), pp. 26-28.

31. Higham, *American Nativism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-330. Devine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-52.

32. Devine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-109.

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refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, it became abundantly clear that the country resisted not only additional immigrants but specifically those kinds of aliens it had been trying to exclude since 1921.

This was also a time of resurgent anti-Semitism in the US ranging from expressions of traditional ethnic and religious prejudice against Jews to more virulent and well-organized anti-Semitic crusades by populist extremists who captivated and incited readers and audiences across the country. More than 15,000 joined William Dudley Pelley's fascist Silver Shirts, while hundreds of thousands regularly listened to the anti-Semitic radio broadcasts of Father Charles E. Coughlin, and around 100,000 read *Defender Magazine* in which Reverend Gerald B. Winrod warned of the Jewish-communist conspiracy to dominate the world.[33]

All indications were of rising prejudice toward Jews that stiffened resistance to opening America's gates to them. Public opinion polls in the late 1930s revealed that 53% of respondents believed "Jews were different and should be restricted;" three fifths attributed undesirable traits to Jews such as selfishness, dishonesty and clannishness; 72% opposed increasing the number of Jewish refugees allowed into America. Drawing upon this sentiment, restrictionist groups repeatedly thwarted all efforts to alter immigration laws, to make exceptions to them in special cases, or to otherwise allow America to play a leadership role in the rescue of Europe's Jews.[34]

Although far less socially acceptable in public discourse among the country's elites and the corridors of government, anti-Semitism had not disappeared from private discussions among America's middle and upper classes. But given Nazi barbarism and repression, few in America's mainstream elites were willing to risk the stigma of anti-Semitism no matter what their true attitudes or private political activities. Thus, when arguing in public, restrictionists eschewed the buzz-word "Jew" as much as possible, though proponents and opponents of immigration amendments alike knew this was always the real issue. Some restrictionists even went so far as to claim they were actually acting in the best interests of Jews. In his 1926 book, *The Melting Pot Mistake*, Henry Pratt Fairchild argued that America narrowly avoided a catastrophe only by recognizing at the last

33. Robert E. Herzstein, *Roosevelt and Hitler: Prelude to War* (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 239-257. David Wyman, *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), pp. 10-20.

34. Richard Breitman and Alan M. Kraut, *American Refugee Policy and European Jewry, 1933-1945* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 58, 88-89. Herzstein, *Roosevelt and Hitler, op. cit.*, pp. 235-236, 239, 256-257, 265. Wyman, *Paper Walls, op. cit.*, pp. 21-23.

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moment the folly of assimilating alien types and by stopping their ingress through the 1924 Act. Now he claimed such restrictions must be maintained because entry of large numbers of Jews would transform America's latent anti-Semitism into violent outbursts.[35]

Also in contrast to the immigration debates of the early twenties, the term "Nordic" — now so tainted by its automatic identification with brutal Nazism — was no longer uttered by many of its earlier exponents. Yet, the restrictionists had not abandoned their racial ideology. Some continued to refer to "blood" affinities when describing American ideas and institutions springing historically from a "homogeneous people," but now diluted and endangered by "new stock immigration" and "the hordes of foreigners that have been admitted prior to 1924." American political institutions could not "stand a wide influx of people who know nothing about our institutions and care less for them." As a matter of fact, maintaining current national quotas against pressure to admit refugees was insufficient; the countless undesirable immigrants already residing in the country must be deported systematically. And there should be a further reduction in the very limited number of immigrants allowed under the 1924 legislation from racially heterogenous countries, so as to return America, as much as possible, "to that homogeneity that we had in 1860, in 1776."[36]

Moreover, the presumed inferiority of recent immigrants continued to be pointed out to Congress and the public. Restrictionists persisted in convincing Congress that recent waves of immigrants came to America because their native lands considered them politically, morally, or physically "undesirable." One clinical psychologist told Congress that "mental and social inadequacies," found predominantly in certain foreign types, were "a serious menace to our civilization and future population." Three-fourths of the "feeble-minded, morons, idiots, and imbeciles" in New York schools, she declared, had "foreign parents." Referring to Poland, she complained "we are completely swamped by this low-grade immigration problem," and warned of the dire consequences of not stopping it soon. "At present the intellectual level of the country is going down hill because of this subnormal immigration;" soon all of New York would be reduced to an "average intelligence" of the eighth grade.[37]

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35. Congress, House, *Admission of German Refugee Children*, 76th Cong., H852-2 (1939), pp. 219-224. Divine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

36. Congress, House, *Nonquota Status to Certain Alien Relatives*, 74th Cong., H772-6 (1935), pp. 36-37.

37. Congress, Senate, *Regulating Status of Aliens*, 74th Cong., S516-10 (1935), pp. 45-54.

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Although restrictionist hopes of further limitations remained unfulfilled, they managed to thwart all efforts to open America to refugees from Nazi Germany. Despite the mounting persecution in Germany and the lack of adequate places of refuge for Jews elsewhere, relaxing the immigration law "never received serious consideration in Congress." In the end, the US admitted proportionally fewer refugees than did England and France.[38] The gates remained closed during WWII, even after the American government confirmed that the Nazis were exterminating millions of Jews. By this point, arguments against admitting more refugees had moved from economics to concerns that rescue efforts interfered with national security and the need to concentrate on achieving military victory. But while America fought the war against Nazism, racism and anti-Semitism remained strong at home and continued to influence the immigration debate. Although the rescue of Jews depended, in part, upon finding places of refuge for them, Americans generally did not want any more Jews — even those facing certain death.[39]

In 1944, John Pehle, executive secretary of the War Refugee Board and a Protestant, struggled to convince Secretary of War Henry Stimson that America should become at least a "temporary" haven for its share of Jewish refugees. Balking at the very notion, Stimson felt compelled to lecture Pehle on the "Jewish problem in this country" and why a quota system had been introduced to prevent "unrestricted immigration of Jews." None of Stimson's objections to temporary camps related to military necessity or resources. The real "danger," as Stimson saw it, was the possibility that "so many Jews" might stay in the US after the war. In fact, he privately explained this to Pehle in the language of 1924 rather than that of 1944: "Our present immigration laws were the result of a very deeply held feeling of our people that the future immigration of racial stocks should be so limited as to coincide with the existing ratio of such stocks already within the country. Furthermore these laws were adopted at the close of the last war . . . for the purpose of preventing the entrance into this country of large blocks of immigrants who were likely to come from the very countries in which most of the present refugees with whom we are concerned originate. Our people then showed that they strongly feared that an uncontrolled immigration from such countries would modify the

38. John Higham, *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 58. Divine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

39. David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon, 1984). Breitman and Kraut, *Refugee Policy*, *op. cit.*

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proportion of the racial stocks already existing in our own population and would introduce into the United States many people who would with difficulty be assimilated into our own population and brought into conformity with our own institutions and traditions."[40]

Eventually, Stimson acquiesced in a WRB plan relocating a mere 1000 Jewish refugees in a "temporary haven" at Fort Ontario, NY, but only with the assurance that they would definitely be repatriated after the war. And this reluctance to allow Jewish victims of Nazism to enter the US continued into the immediate postwar years. Despite the shock and sympathy aroused when the liberation of concentration camps revealed the true horrors and incomprehensible dimensions of Nazi genocide, the perception of Jews as an unwanted alien race detrimental to a necessary and cherished national homogeneity had not disappeared from the immigration debate. This was quite obvious in the congressional battles between 1946 and 1948 over whether to admit Holocaust survivors and other Displaced Persons who could not be repatriated. Among the economic and national security arguments could still be heard racial rhetoric from restrictionists who, nevertheless, vehemently protested any identification of them with racism or anti-Semitism. Since "this country could not stand further dilution of its basic stock or our political institutions would be doomed," it was logical and imperative to reject "those kinds" that could not be assimilated. The "hard-working, honest, and industrious" northern Europeans were clearly preferable to the "mentally fogged" new wave of "undesirables," who crowd into the congested slums of the big cities, the breeding grounds of "gangsterism, anarchism [and] communism."[41]

Occasionally, subterfuge and the euphemism "refugee" would give way to the blunt statements of the real issue — America would be "flooded with Jews." The 1948 Displaced Persons Act did, in fact, discriminate against Jewish refugees while giving priority to Baltic peoples considered compatible with America's native stock. Reluctantly signing the bill, President Truman attributed the *de facto* exclusion of so many Jews to "abhorrent intolerance." Although a revision two years later eliminated such discriminatory preferences in DP admissions, the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act dealing with general immigration retained both the underlying racial

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40. Stimson to Pehle, March 31, 1944, ASW 400.38, RG 107, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Henry L. Stimson Diaries, March 9, 21 31, and May 8, 1944, Microfilm, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

41. Congress, House, *World War II European Refugee Resettlement in U.S.*, 80th Cong., H1174-4 (1947), pp. 85-114. Devine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-146.

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philosophy and essential policies of the 1924 quota system.[42]

Naturally, in light of the Nazi experience, one could no longer parade before the public the racial intelligentsia and eugenicists as expert witnesses. Such ideas and thinkers had also ceased being *Salonfähig* among American social scientists and university elites. But explicit reiteration of the theoretical foundations of such beliefs proved unnecessary, as they had already been culturally ingrained among widespread segments of the population and institutionalized through influential restrictionist organizations like the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies.

Although all sides knew the central point of contention was racial and ethnic homogeneity, McCarran and others sought to insulate themselves from charges of racism by speaking in terms of "cultural affinities." But while denying their legislation had anything to do with the tainted theory of "Nordic supremacy," they worked hard to limit immigration from eastern and southern Europe; one committee report even emphasized the large number of Jews among these. Indeed, from the mouths of certain congressmen and senators came candid statements like: must one "apologize for being a hateful Anglo-Saxon;" preserve the "homogeneity of the American people;" or even: regarding "racial origin— though I am not a follower of Hitler — there is something to it. We cannot tie a stone around its neck and drop into the middle of the Atlantic just because it worked to the contrary in Germany."[43]

With overwhelming majorities, both houses of Congress overrode Truman's veto to pass the McCarran-Walter Act. This legislation reserved about 85 per cent of the European quota for northwestern European immigrants. America's homogeneity appeared secured against extensive penetration from the outside world, whereas domestically the purity of the white race was preserved through the anti-miscegenation laws in some states and intimidating social taboos throughout the rest of the country. Racial intermarriage or sexual relations of whites with blacks or Asians remained inconceivable acts to most Americans, though these same people self-righteously condemned the Nazi racist Nuremberg Laws. And for some time intermarriage of the right kind of whites with European ethnic and religious minorities was still socially discouraged.

But behold, over the decades, immigrants from eastern and southern

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42. Leonard Dinnerstein, *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 113-115, 144-145, 158-159. Devine, *American Immigration*, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

43. Devine, *American Immigration*, pp. 164-191.

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Europe and their descendants were assimilated. Europeans of the types formerly considered inferior and superior began not only to display the same cultural characteristics but to intermarry in increasingly larger numbers. Only the political fringe made serious racial distinctions among whites. Earlier frantic apprehensions of catastrophic consequences of destroying the country's racial homogeneity through the bastardization caused by eastern and southern Europeans disappeared to such an extent that America forgot that the term Nordic had ever been a part of this democratic country's vocabulary. Prejudice against stereotypical characteristics of Jews and Italians persisted, but declined appreciably in the postwar decades. Equally important, such groups were no longer feared and condemned as inherent political and genetic dangers to the country's very nature and future welfare.[44] In the popular consciousness, ethnics gradually became white.

This gradual, though momentous, transformation was quite evident in the Immigration Act of 1965, which actually eliminated the national quota system. This law occurred as part of the overall progressive climate in which civil rights legislation and other hallmarks of Johnson's Great Society liberalized America in so many ways. Underlying the trend toward progressive ideas and tolerant attitudes stood the economic prosperity of the 1960s and pre-Viet Nam confidence and optimism about the future. Racism, especially toward blacks, remained strong throughout the country, but articulation of racial theories was identified only with bigots and neo-Nazis. In any event, the formerly "undesirable" Europeans ceased being the focus of racism. The Italian quota rose from 6,000 to 20,000, and America again seemed to be living up to the inscription on the Statue of Liberty.[45]

However, though the category of whiteness had been expanded, it had not disappeared, and in coming decades it would regain its significance. Unintentionally and unexpectedly, the 1965 Act had opened the way for the non-white world to flow into America. As part of the general atmosphere of toleration, in conjunction with Cold War competition for the allegiance of the Third World, this legislation also eliminated the restrictions that had kept out most non-Europeans. It was a concession made only amidst confident predictions and firm assurances that Third World immigration would definitely not rise appreciably and thus would have little impact on America's racial make-up. But in coming decades, European

44. Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 150-174. David M. Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), pp. 72-73.

45. Reimers, *Golden Door, op. cit.*, pp. 65-67, 81-82.

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immigration actually dropped while the Third World provided an incessant influx until most immigrants originated from these regions.[46]

Immigration no longer meant the huddled masses of Europe, but Asians, Latin Americans, Africans, and Middle Easterners. Before 1965, most Asian nations had a quota of a mere 100, whereas within ten years Asians constituted almost half of all immigration. As the total rose into the millions over the next thirty years, it literally altered the physical, cultural, and linguistic human complexion of America. They were no longer the small exotic minorities rarely seen by most Americans, but permanent, increasingly visible features of the society. One of the most dramatic changes in American history had occurred without most Americans initially paying attention to it, since the 1965 Act had passed without the heated national controversy surrounding all previous major showdowns on immigration.[47]

This all coincided with pivotal structural changes in American society and its economy. White flight, like deindustrialization and urban decay in major cities, left a vacuum filled more and more by Third World immigrants. When merged with the problems of illegal immigrants and indigenous African-American urban communities, the issue of Third World immigration and urban existence became intertwined with general concerns about drugs, crime, welfare, racial tensions, and periodic outbreaks of urban violence. For old line racists, this was the Grant-Stoddard nightmare of white America's loss of its great metropolitan areas to the darker races who posed an inherent threat to higher civilization.

Moreover, both the power and desirability of assimilation again came into question. If earlier generations squabbled over whether "whites" should marry Italians or Jews, the issue was much more contentious when it involved non-white races with sharper physical and cultural differences. Even on the purely cultural level, new movements originating in the 1960s for retaining ethnic and racial cultural identities among old and new minorities raised doubts about whether these immigrants actually wanted to assimilate.

Nonetheless, citing the need for labor amidst the 1980's economic boom, while celebrating America's cherished Melting Pot history and the significant continuing contributions of immigrants, Congress enacted an immigration act in 1990 that substantially increased the annual total number of immigrants. Under strong lobbying by racial and ethnic coalitions, Congress passed this law without much public scrutiny, even though pub-

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-79.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-206.

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lic sentiment had already started to move in the other direction.[48] When over the next few years, economic decline and insecurity began to seriously affect middle-class white America, while high-wage low-skilled working class jobs were continually lost to overseas competition, the reaction against "foreigners" surfaced quickly, and became a part of the growing hostility toward welfare, urban problems, and affirmative action.

But the return of immigration as a political issue in the 1990s has also retained its important racial dimension alongside the socio-economic conditions that clearly helped revitalize and sustain it. Besides disputes over bilingual education and ethnic studies departments, one reads more and more about preserving cultural homogeneity, unity, and identity. When demographic predictions enter the picture, the entire question takes on far greater urgency. For some time, academics have argued that birth rates among minorities combined with Third World immigration will give America a non-white majority several decades from now. Thus, for the first time in its history, white America faces the prospect of losing its numerical domination and itself becoming a racial minority.

That such factors are generating a heightened white consciousness is pretty clear. Ironically, this sense of white identity is often shared by the new whites of ethnic origin, some of whom employ similar arguments (privately also occasionally invoke the same epithets and stereotypes) that their former Nordic superiors used against their grandparents. And certain politicians, while attempting to protect themselves against charges of racism by using economic and cultural arguments, or euphemisms and codewords, or focusing on "illegal immigration," have already seized upon this volatile issue. It is a political trend likely to spread rapidly in coming years as immigration *vis à vis* American identity attracts more and more attention. Reputable magazines like *Atlantic* now publish articles essentially calling for a halt to immigration until the country can assimilate the newcomers it has already admitted, otherwise predicting dire consequences for the country and the immigrants.[49]

Perhaps a more prophetic sign of the times and forecast of future trends, the intellectual climate has for the first time in decades become highly conducive to this kind of thought. Psychologists attest to the validity

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 252-263.

49. Roy Beck, "The Ordeal of Immigration in Wausau," *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1994), pp. 84-97. See also: Matthew Connelly and Paul Kennedy, "Must It Be the Rest against the West?" *Atlantic Monthly* (December 1994), pp. 61-91. Jack Miles, "The Coming Immigration Debate," *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1995), pp. 130-140. Benjamin Schwarz, "The Diversity Myth: America's Leading Export," *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1995), pp. 57-67.

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of Bell Curve arguments, thereby helping to rekindle the old debate over race and intelligence, while scholarly conferences are held on genetic predispositions to crime. Both have particular relevance for non-whites in the country's major urban centers. Equally suggestive, academics have already noticed the reemergence of "whiteness" and "white consciousness" as issues, and have started pursuing these as subjects of scholarly investigation and publication. Major colleges are beginning to sponsor conferences on "White Identity," with papers on the "Cultural Concept of Whiteness."[50]

Even the fringes seem to be making a comeback in this national climate. Long the champions of "white christian civilization," various white supremacist groups are increasing their numbers and visibility. From a historical perspective, it is perhaps noteworthy that the most active centers of white supremacy tend to be the mountains of the northwest — from northern California to Idaho and Washington. In recent years, these same areas have been magnets for a migration of average white Americans retreating from what they see as America's hopelessly decaying, dangerous, and "darker" cities. Of course, readers earlier in this century of Woodruff's *Effects of Tropical Light on White Men* would not be surprised. After all, he had predicted scientifically that these forested mountainous northern regions were the only natural "zoological zones" in which the blonde types could thrive.

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50. See the survey of recent research on "whiteness" in Liz McMillen, "Lifting the Veil From Whiteness: Growing Body of Scholarship Challenges a Racial 'Norm'," *Chronicle of Higher Education* (September 8, 1995), pp. 11, 23. See also the conference on "White Identity: Thinking About Race," Dickenson College, Carlisle, PA, November 13-15, 1995. In the sphere of popular culture, one can even buy T-shirts with a takeoff on the original black slogan: "It's a Blond Thing, You Wouldn't Understand."

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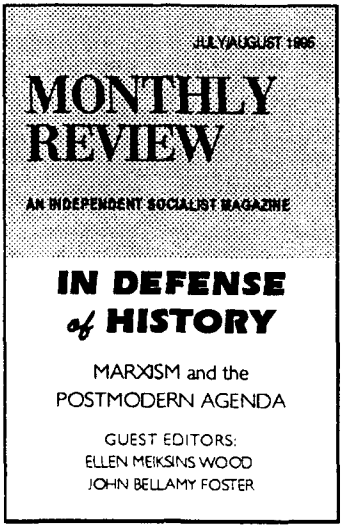
table of contents

- WHAT IS THE 'POSTMODERN' AGENDA? AN INTRODUCTION by Ellen Meiksins Wood
- LANGUAGE, HISTORY, AND CLASS STRUGGLE by David McNally
- THE POLITICS OF CULTURAL STUDIES by Francis Mulhern
- CULTURE, NATIONALISM, AND THE ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS an interview with Aijaz Ahmad



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Methodological Individualism

Luciano Pellicani

The central postulate of sociology is that coexistence among people generates a series of norms which determine behavior. Although the products of social interaction, these norms have considerable autonomy in relation to particular individuals and exercise a constant pressure on them. The discovery of these norms and their importance by the anti-individualist tradition led Schumpeter to write that "in sociology one does not go very far with individualism."[1] More recently, Boudon has observed that methodological individualism, "which, after Adam Smith, was so readily accepted in economics, has met considerable resistance in sociology."[2] Nisbet, however, may have gone too far in claiming that the whole sociological tradition is based on the "revolt against individualism."[3] Sociology has not one but many traditions. At times it has veered toward individualism, at others toward collectivism, in a theoretical *continuum*.[4] The debate is not over. This means that sociology has not succeeded in becoming a "normal science" and remains in an immature phase, characterized by a variety of paradigms.[5] Almost a century after Tarde and Durkheim, it is still being argued that "sociology is no more than a corollary

1. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *L'Essenza e i Principi dell'Economia Politica* (Laterza, Bari 1982), p. 87.
2. Raymond Boudon, "L'Individualisme Méthodologique en Sociologie, in *Interrogations* (1984).
3. Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Traditions* (Cambridge University Press, London 1970), p. 7.
4. William Skidmore, *The Theoretical Thinking in Sociology* (Cambridge University Press, London 1970) p. 69.
5. David Thomas, *Naturalism and Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 265.

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of psychology."[6] While psychologism is a minority standpoint in contemporary sociology, the same cannot be said of methodological individualism. In recent years, under Popper's influence, the number of methodological individualists has grown. If that position were to become universally accepted, however, sociology and economics would merge into one discipline. There would be an end to the embarrassing situation characterized by the fact that, while economists accept individualism, many sociologists (and nearly all anthropologists) continue to regard it as inadequate.

While thought-provoking, Parsons' attempt by to reconcile sociological traditions cannot be said to have succeeded. Apart from its failure to appreciate historical materialism — probably more the result of political and ideological than scientific considerations,[7] when Parsons seeks to reconcile the Weberian concept of social action and the Durkheimian notion of social fact he misses what Ortega y Gasset did not, i.e., that Weber's and Durkheim's definitions of the object of sociology are incompatible.[8]

According to Durkheim, the object of sociological inquiry is the totality of "the ways of thought, feeling and action external to the individual and endowed with a power of coercion, by virtue of which they impose themselves on him."[9] These constitute a reality *sui generis*, impossible to deduce from the individuals' psychological motivations or their biological needs. It is a system of values and modes of behavior which human beings, when they come into society, find already constituted, structured and dominant. Moreover, it carries sanctions: it is a moral power which compels people to behave in a certain way, and anyone wishing to stay in good standing within their group must conform to it. Durkheim adds that these "social facts" — all the beliefs, values and *normae agendi* called culture[10] — are not limited to the external regulation of individual behavior; they also mould their very personality. Through socialization (Durkheim calls it "moral education") culture penetrates individual consciousness, "works on" it, and shapes it in a particular way. Thus sociology is the discipline concerned with analyzing the impact of cultural

6. George C. Homas, *The Nature of Social Science* (New York: Hartcourt, Brace and World, 1967), p. 164.

7. See Alvin Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, 1970).

8. See Luciano Pellicani, *La Sociologia Storica di Ortega y Gasset* (Milan: SugarCo, 1987), pp. 51-56.

9. Emile Durkheim, *Le Regole del Metodo Sociologico* (Milan: Comunita, 1963), p. 26.

10. See Leslie A.White, *The Science of Culture*, (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1969).

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variables on the mentality of individuals and their behavior.

Weber's idea of the object of sociology is rather different, so different in fact that Durkheim and Weber have been said to "have absolutely nothing in common."[11] In interpretive sociology, the social is not seen as a reality *sui generis*, endowed with the power of extra-individual coercion and regulation; there are only individuals and the significance they attribute to their actions. According to Weber, one can "speak of 'social action' whenever human action is subjectively related in meaning to the behavior of others. . . . An important (though not indespensable) normal component of social action is its meaningful orientation to the expectations of certain behavior on the part of others. . ."[12] While Durkheim is a realist, Weber, like Tarde, is a nominalist who, however, rejects psychologism. While recognizing that imitation is important in social dynamics,[13] he is careful to point out that "Interpretive sociology . . . is not part of a 'psychology.' The immediately 'most understandable kind' of meaning structure of an action is . . . action subjectively, rigorously, and rationally oriented toward means that are (subjectively) held to be unequivocably adequate for the attainment of (subjective) unequivocably and clearly comprehended ends. And this is true especially when those means also seem to the observer to be suited to his ends."[14] Weber adds that, in order to decipher the meaning of social action, it is necessary to take into consideration the expectations of others. But these expectations are not culturally defined, as in Durkheim: they are not fixed in the impersonal way tradition is. Thus Weber writes: "We speak of community action when human action is related, in a subjective fashion endowed with meaning, to the attitudes of other human beings. . . . A rational action related to the purpose is orientated on the basis of expectations. The expectations of a given attitude of other human beings apart from the one who is acting in a subjectively rational faction may be based on the fact that that person expects from them an attitude endowed with meaning, with various levels of possibility."[15]

Here as elsewhere, Weber insists that on the social level there are only individuals, along with meanings understood in a purely subjective sense, which they attribute to their actions and those of other individuals with

11. Paul Veyne, *Come si Scrive la Storia* (Bari: Laterza, 1973), p. 473.
12. Max Weber, "Some Categories of Interpretive Sociology," in The Sociological Quarterly 22 (Spring 1981), p. 159.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
14. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), Vol. 1, p. 4.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

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whom they interact. The social, in Durkheim's sense, i.e., culture as an extra-individual normative structure "with a life of its own,"[16] is completely absent. In interpretive sociology there are no culturally defined and sanctioned expectations prior to the interaction between the social actors. As with "expectations" in economics, Weberian expectations are the result of objective calculations — objective in the sense that they can be duplicated by outside observers. Therefore, action is always clear and rational. This is because the actor is by definition a subject with universally calculable interests. Because of this, his action is "susceptible to functional analysis . . . and appears as a *means* related to an *end,* universally recognized as valid."[17] In short, the Weberian actor is *homo oeconomicus*. It is not surprising, therefore, that those who accept interpretive sociology, such as Boudon and Watkins, have concluded that his method is substantially the same as that of catallactics.

If this is correct, the question immediately arises as to how can sociology be an autonomous discipline, alongside economics. Further, what can be said in reply to Mises when he argues that all forms of human behavior come within the domain of catallactics? Here Mises has been clear: "The fundamental law of action is the economic principle" and every action falls "within its domain." Therefore, "action is by definition always rational," so that it is not difficult to see in every human action the basic categories of catallactics."[18]

Mises' position is extreme. But it is clear and logically coherent. If methodological individualism is adequate, even when analyzing behavior not strictly economic, then sociology can be reduced to mere catallactics,[19] which is concerned solely with the instrumental dimension of social action (since it regards the axiological dimension outside its domain). Thus, as Mises is careful to emphasize, it does not make much sense to talk about rational action with respect to values, as Weber does. Rationality is always and exclusively instrumental. It follows that all actions are subject to its imperatives, that economics (or catallactics) deals with all human activity.

While Mises sees clear where methodological individualism leads, i.e., to the dissolution of sociology into economics, Parsons does not even

16. Emile Durkheim, *La Divisione Sociale del Lavoro* (Milan: Comunità, 1971), p. 101.
17. Ernesto Melandri, "Introduzione," in Alfred Schutz, *La Fenomenologia del Mondo Sociale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1974), p. XIV.
18. Ludwig von Mises, *Epistemological Problems of Economics* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), p. 153.
19. See Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action* (Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1966).

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seem to entertain such a possibility. Moreover, Parsons does not realize that it is impossible to accept the Weberian definition of social action and still claim that "society has properties which cannot be derived, through a process of direct derivation, from the units which constitute it."[20] Such an operation entails combining the idea that social action is *exclusively* explained in terms of the significance individuals attribute to their actions (and those of others), with the idea that there is an extra-individual reality which determines, or at least influences, what the actors think, feel and do. Weber's social action (more correctly, inter-individual action) and Durkheim's social fact reintroduce two concepts of sociology which are not merely distinct but mutually incompatible. The first is strictly nominalistic,[21] while the second is strictly realistic. For Weber, the social does not exist *sui generis*. There are only individuals. Consequently, for interpretive sociology the starting point is the actors' representations which do not refer back to anything else and, as a result, are in principle perfectly "transparent." This transparency is best exemplified by purpose rationality (*Zweckrationalität*), the perfect example of which is the market. Here it is unnecessary to appeal to collective representations, extra-individual meanings or normative pressures. All that is required is the rational calculation of costs and income. In short, rational action with an end in view is the mode of action of *homo oeconomicus*, which cannot avoid being perfectly transparent because his reasons, however subjective, are perfectly understandable by any outsider observer. Here freedom, rationality and transparency are all inextricably bound.

With Durkheimian sociology, in order to explain behavior it is necessary to begin with extra-individual reality — the moral power society exercises through socialization and social control. It is as if society lived in the individual, and thought through him, without the individual being even aware of the fact.[22] Thus the significance individuals attribute to their actions is only minimally "subjective." Social actors interpret themselves, decode meaning and anticipate the reactions of others in terms of what society, through its specific agencies of socialization, has deposited in them. In Durkheim's view, religious beliefs, moral principles, norms, expectations and ideals are objective realities, both impersonal and anonymous.

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20. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1949), p. 314.

21. Max Scheler, "L'Esclusione della Filosofia in Max Weber," in *Lo Spirito del Capitalismo* (Naples: Guida, 1988).

22. The same thesis we find in Marx.

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Parsons shares Durkheim's view. He has always insisted that the internalization of models of values is crucial to the integration of the actor in a role-system.[23] He has also emphasized that the solution to the "Hobbes' problem" is only possible if it is perceived that "not only contractual relations but in general every stable social relations and the personal equilibrium of members of a social group depends on the existence of a normative structure related to such behavior, generally accepted by the members of the community as a source of moral authority, and dependent also on their effective submission to such norms. They not only regulate the choice by individuals of the appropriate means for their ends, but even their needs and their desires are in part determined by these norms."[24] But this is exactly what *cannot* found in interpretive sociology. It is no accident that in all of Weber's works there is no theory of socialization — something which, as already indicated, plays a central role in Durkheim and Parsons. Weber *does* talk about "traditional action." It is significant, however, that he defines it as action "determined by habituation," and concludes that "traditional behavor . . . lies very close to the boarderline of what can justifiably be called meaningfully oriented action, and indeed often on the other side."[25] This is equivalent to admitting impotence. It means that traditional action is beyond the conceptual network of interpretive sociology, since it is devoid of what Weber considers the essential prerequisite of human action: transparency.

This is not all. Weber does not seem to have a clue as to what Durkheim perceives with the greatest clarity: the coercive-normative character of the social, and its autonomy *vis à vis* particular individuals. Moreover, he does not seem, to have heeded Hegel's and Marx's lesson, nor what Simmel wrote, i.e., that to justify sociology as a "new science" it was imperative to discover "an object the existence of which had (hitherto) remained unknown," i.e., "the social in human existence."[26] Hegel called it "objective spirit," while Marx redefined it as "ideology" — two distinct formulations irreducible to one another. Yet both entail the idea that society unleashes a collective spirit within which human beings live, think and act. Both Hegel and Marx begin with an extra-individual reality

23. Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, "Values, Motives and System of Action," in Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, ed., *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) p. 156.
24. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, *op. cit.*, p. 469.
25. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
26. Georg Simmel, *Sociologia* (Milano: Comunita, 1990), p. 22.

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which, while created by human beings, operates *on* them and *in* them as an impersonal force. As such, individuals are immersed in a representation of the world which, although they appropriate it, comes from outside. It is a reality already structured and saturated with meanings accumulated by previous generations. Only through this reality can they decipher the "social hieroglyphics" and interpret the meaning of their own actions, as well as those of other individuals with whom they interact. In this sense, all individuals carry within themselves the culture of the group to which they belong or (and this is substantially the same thing) they have a *basic personality* forged by the social environment within which they have received their cultural formation. [27]

No claim of the kind has ever been made by anyone in interpretive sociology because, from their perspective, there are only structures of individual meaning — subjectively understood meanings which do not rest on an autonomous cultural system. The idea that the cultural identity of a society is constantly reproduced through socialization processes is foreign to the Weberian concept of sociology or, more precisely, it is formulated in a very inadequate manner. Weber identifies traditional action with habit. This is baffling, at least to the extent that tradition is not limited to generating habits. It does much more: it moulds, regulates and governs order. Traditional action, the prototype of social action as such (at least to the extent that to be human means, always and necessarily, "*to be in a tradition*"[28]) is not such because it is habitual, as Weber seems to think, but because it is governed by a moral power usually endowed with a sacredness [*sacertà*] which, on occasions, violently strikes deviants. It is *norm-endowed social action* — the kind individuals *must* undertake if they do not want to be punished. In this sense, every human being has no choice but to conform to the group's prevailing "folkways."[29]

This is best exemplified by the normative and coercive role of fashions. They cannot be challenged: everyone must conform to them, and there is hardly any possibility of questioning them. It is enough that "everyone follows them,"[30] They obtain automatically, precisely because, through

27. As Luciano Cavalli writes, "the ultimate aims of systems of individual action are integrated in such a way as to form a single common system of ultimate aims — the uniting force that holds the whole structure together." See Luciano Cavalli, *Il Mutamento Sociale* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1970), p. 465.

28. José Ortega y Gasset, *Storia e Sociologia* (Napoli: Liguori, 1983), p. 241.

29. G. P. Murdock, "La Scienza della Cultura," in Pietro Rossi, ed., *Il Concetto di Cultura* (Torino: Einaudi, 1970), p. 205.

30. William G. Sumner, *Folkways* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1906), p. 206.

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their control mechanisms, they strike all deviants, i.e., those who do not conform to them. What would happen if, say, a professor were to walk into a class dressed as an ancient Roman? He would be promptly and mercilessly be met by the students laughter. The sanction is undeniably unpleasant and could have disastrous consequences for the professor's authority.

This is a trivial example, but an instructive one. It exemplifies the impersonal and automatic character of society's power. If one dresses one way rather than another, this is not simply because one is accustomed to do so, but because this is how "one dresses" in that particular society. Of course, "elegance" suggests that there are a variety of possibilities. Yet such possibilities obtain only within a scheme impersonally pre-arranged by prevailing fashion: a scheme everyone is obliged to observe as if invested with a specific authority. This is social control, i.e., the specific mechanism whereby society, or a particular group within it, imposes institutionalized norms. It is a power which, in different degrees, everyone spontaneously exercises and which everyone has to abide. Every deviant, no matter the extent of the transgression, must confront the predictable automatic group reactions, thanks to which the group maintains a certain level of conformity and without which it would cease being a group and would dissolve into a mere aggregation of individuals.

Thus, society means sanctions. They may be weak or strong, specific or diffuse. In all cases, however, they clearly indicate that it is a matter of social norms and prevailing modes of behavior — something very different from the "habit" methodological individualists deploy to explain social conformity. Habit is a mode of behavior one or more individuals freely adopt, and which they can freely change. They are, so to speak, the masters of their habits. Contrariwise, individuals are not masters of social norms. With their spontaneous vigilance they contribute by their enforcement, but they cannot change them *at will*. A habit may become so widespread as to acquire the typical characteristics of a sanctioned mode of behavior. In this case, it ceases to be a habit and becomes part of the institutional structure of society or of a particular group.

To illustrate this, consider the way people greet one another. From the viewpoint of methodological individualism, a greeting is simply an acquired habit. But greeting is not, or it is not just a matter of habit. As already indicated, when a social actor does something by force of habit, he is free to behave as he pleases: he can vary his behavior at will, without anything unpleasant happening to him. Yet, if he decides to refrain from the established way of greeting others in some way, he is immediately

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affected by more or less serious but always unpleasant sanctions. At most, his refusal to conform to established practice may lead to a breakdown in communications with others, or even to a violent reaction. This unmistakably indicates it is a mode of behavior which is a genuine social norm, i.e., an impersonal or extra-individual command. It also indicates that methodological individualism is constitutionally incapable of grasping the nature of the social as a ruling reality independent of single individuals.

Here a qualification is in order. To say that culture is a reality with a life of its own does not mean that, if all the members of any given society disappeared, culture would remain. It simply means that from the viewpoint of single individuals there are *independent* social facts — beliefs, values, norms, etc. — which obtain by virtue of their coercive and normative power. These facts often have remote roots — one need only think of language, which is the most classic example of a system of prevailing collective norms "independent of the individual."[31] They have acquired the status of impersonal and objective *normae agendi* "not reducible to factors inherent in individuals' thoughts and actions."[32]

Who watches over individual behavior? Who compels individuals them to behave in some way rather than another? Who controls their opinions? The inevitable answer is: everyone and no one, i.e., that strange, anonymous and impersonal subject Ortega called" the people." It is people who watch over the behavior of single individuals, and they often do it even by intervening violently, always by enforcing sanctions. All societies spontaneously deploy norms of various kinds — moral, religious, aesthetic, political, etc. — and they do so automatically. Thus all are at one and the same time the enforcers and the targets of collective norms. All are subject to the people's impersonal and universal power. Even the despot is no exception: as soon as he seeks to violate certain usages endowed with sacredness, he meets resistance so strong that he may be forced to yield to it.

One example will suffice to illustrate the formidable, diffused power exercised by the people. The first scene of Jerzy Kawalerowicz' film *The Pharaoh* shows the Egyptian army blocked during maneuvers by the presence of a beetle. For the Egyptians of the time, the beetle was a sacred insect. Because of it, the army was forced to change its plans. The pharaoh finds this absurd. "Not even a jackass would change his plans because of an insect!" he exclaims in irritation. "But a jackass," replies

31. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Corso di Linguistica Generale* (Bari: Laterza, 1987), p. 29.
32. Maurice Mandelbaun, "Fatti Sociologici," in M.V. Predeval Magrini, ed., *Filosofia Analitica e Conoscenza Storica* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1979), p. 376.

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the High Priest standing beside him, "could never rule Egypt." In other words: the pharaoh can order anything, except behavior forbidden by the prevailing religion. If he wishes to govern without opposition, he must adapt himself to traditional usage, respect established prejudices and conform to the institutionalized ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

All this is inexplicable according to Weber's and Mises' definition of social action. This is a typical example of conflict between what *ratio* dictates and what *traditio* demands. *Traditio* is not simply acquired habit. It is something more and profoundly different from habit: it is an impersonal power which legislates, commands and punishes. To deviate from the fixed path of *traditio* is tantamount to clashing with a moral power diffuse, invisible and yet extremely strong. The film exemplifies the pharaoh's attempts to govern by stepping over religious usages — attempts resulting in the revolt of his subjects, offended in their most sacred sentiments. In the end, *traditio* defeats *ratio;* the pharaoh is overthrown and replaced by a man who, with the priests' backing, restores the rule of ancient usages.

Contrary to what Weber thought and what Watkins reiterates, the social is not a system of acquired habits.[33] Rather, it is *a system of modes of behavior armed with sanctions; it is an impersonal, widely diffused and all-pervasive power effecting all members of a given society.* Nor is the social a system of conventions, since the latter presuppose an agreement which is not always to be found if one analyzes the genesis of collective rules. Moreover, often a convention arising from an agreement does not differ from one which has arisen in another way,[34] which means it changes nature and becomes a prevailing norm binding for all members of a given community, even though they did not contribute to its institution. A neologism may be coined through a convention stipulated within a scientific community. With the passage of time, however, it becomes autonomous and imposed as if it were independent of individuals. This is even more true of the language into which the neologism is inserted. In fact, language is always something one submits to rather than something one freely chooses.[35] It demonstrates beyond all doubt that all social groups live within systems of norms they have inherited. Clearly, there has to be a mass of speakers before there can

33. John Watkins, "La Pretesa Insufficienza dell'Individualismo Metodologico," in M.V. Predaval Magrini, ed., *Filosofia Analitica e Conoscenza Storica* (Firenze: La Nova Italia, 1979), p. 399.

34. David K. Lewis, *Convention* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 98.

35. Saussure, *Corso di Linguistica Generale*, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

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be a language. It is equally clear, however, that with regard to language individuals have little choice. If they wish to communicate and be understood, there is no alternative to abiding by prevailing linguistic usages constituting a reality to which they must submit in a disciplined manner.

This does not mean individuals lack any creative power in relation to the cultural tradition in which they have been socialized. It simply means that this creative power must overcome the barrier of institutional usages and make space for itself within a mass of resistances and negative sanctions, i.e., it must struggle to bring about a change in the way people think, feel and act. If and when the bearer of a new idea is successful, the result will be that the new idea will become a prevailing opinion, i.e., a commonplace no one is likely to challenge and which, for that very reason, will end up exercising an unconscious domination over people. It will cease to be an idea and will become a belief, i.e., a social fact. From the individual perspective, a genuine belief is not very different from a natural object. This is why Durkheim described "social facts" as "things." Beliefs, shared values, institutionalized norms and legitimate aspirations can all be dealt with as though they were things insofar as they are realities *external* to individuals, *independent* of them and endowed with an almost physical *resistance.* The pharaoh in Kawalerowicz' film did not understand this and, precisely for that reason, ended by triggering a revolt among his subjects. He had sought to govern without taking account of prevailing opinions — an unwise attempt, because those same opinions were the basis of his authority; what transformed his messages into commands which were promptly carried out. In other words, he had not understood that beliefs rule in an impersonal fashion, and that everyone, without exception, is subject to their domination.

The objection could be made here that, in Weber's work, there is a theory of legitimacy based on the concept of belief. Strictly speaking, however, it is only a typology of the forms of legitimate domination rather than a theory of legitimacy. Not accidentally, what is missing is an analysis of that particular social phenomenon called "belief." Weber limits himself to stating that "a willingness to submit to and order imposed by one man or a small group always implies a belief in the legitimate authority," and that "every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy."[36] But nothing is said about the nature of belief, and it is easy to understand why. An analysis of the power of beliefs would have led

36. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 37 and p. 213.

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Weber to distance himself from the methodological presuppositions of interpretive sociology and draw nearer to Durkheim's position. In other words, it would have led him to recognize that there are extra-individual realities and that they regulate human behavior — realities without which it is impossible to understand the dialectic of command and obedience. This is why the Weberian theory of forms of legitimate domination remains as if suspended in the void.

Methodological individualism misses not only the *coercive* but also the formative character of cultural tradition. Culture does not just regulate human behavior *from outside*. It also fulfils the no less important function of constructing *from within* the personality of those subjected to its jurisdiction. As it penetrates individuals through socialization, it "moulds" them like wax and gives them a particular form. It injects into them beliefs, values, norms, expectations, ideals and aversions: things individuals do not create but gradually assimilate from their socio-cultural environment. This is why individual personality has a double character. It is simultaneously individual and collective, a personal as well as a social construction. Consequently, most ideas individuals regard as their own are in fact ideas (more precisely commonplaces, prevailing opinions, or *doxai*) of the society in which they live. These ideas end up by becoming identified with reality itself and for this reason lose their character of ideas and become beliefs. According to Ortega, who studied this theme more than any other sociologist, who has meditated longer and better on this theme than any other sociologist,[37] beliefs are ideas one no longer thinks about, or which one has never thought of — uncritically received and accepted ideas, impersonal ideas which have an enormous power in that they are spontaneously shared by those who live under the same regime of usages. People live within beliefs, are immersed in them from birth and subjected to their normative pressure, just as they live in the atmosphere. Through beliefs they read the world, decipher the social hieroglyphics and interpret the meaning of their actions as well as those of others. Thus the meanings attributed to surroundings — people, institutions, things, etc. — are culturally transmitted and socially sanctioned. People accept them without being aware of it from the *traditio* in which they have been brought up.

None of this can be seen from the standpoint of methodological individualism. Once the sociological method is defined as the construction of

37. Jose Ortega y Gasset, "Idee e Credenze," in *Aurora della Ragione Storica* (Milano: Sugar Co, 1983).

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"models in descriptive or nominalistic terms, i.e. in terms of individuals,"[38] it follows that, e.g., the meaning of a Moslem's praying does not depend on the religious tradition within which he has been socialized. Strictly speaking, according to the Weberian account, if he prays in solitude, his action remains outside sociology. The conceptual framework of sociological individualism is structured in such a way that it can only provide an explanation of the instrumental rationale of an action, which is the rationality of catallactics. It is the rationality of *homo oeconomicus* — a subject without any *traditio*. This approach is undoubtedly useful when it comes to analyzing the choices of individuals operating within a market situation,[39] but it is questionable when it is a matter of analyzing the behavior of individuals operating outside the logic of catallactics. Is it possible to provide what Weber called "interpretive explanations" of human action while ignoring cultural traditions?

To realize the inadequacy of the cognitive strategy deployed by the partisans of methodological individualism, it may be useful to recall the Aztecs' military conduct toward the *consquistodores*. They did not seek to defeat their enemy, but rather to take prisoners in order to sacrifice them according to the rites sanctioned by their culture. Such a practice was perfectly functional within a state organization whose main aim was the production and redistribution of substantial quantities of animal protein as human flesh.[40] But it turned out to be highly irrational in relation to the altogether different way of fighting of the Spaniards. Despite this, the Aztecs did not modify their military practices because they had been sanctioned by their religion. Even when their capital was besieged by Cortes, they did not abandon the rigid fighting methods of their *traditio*, thus bringing about their own ruin.[41] This is a particularly apt example of how tradition determines the people's *forma mentis* and, consequently, their behavior. It best illustrates the coercive-normative character of culture and its autonomy in relation to individuals.

The subjectivistic illusion, typical of interpretive sociology consists in claiming that human beings interpret and assess the world in which they operate by beginning exclusively from themselves. In reality, things happen

38. Karl R. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Lowe and Brydone, 1961), p. 122.

39. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), vol. II, p. 118.

40. Marvin Harris, *Cannibals and Kings* (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 174.

41. William H. Prescott, *History of Conquest of Mexico* (Roma: Newton Compton, 1978).

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in a very different way: people think within a *Weltanschauung* received from previous generations and within which they are condemned to live as if in a cage. Even professional producers of ideas, such as philosophers, scholars, etc., think of the world according to the mental schemes of the cultural tradition in which they have been socialized. They work creatively within the solid context of prevailing beliefs, which no phenomenological *époché* can eliminate. Whether aware of it or not, along with all other human beings, they are immersed in commonplaces — opinions received and sanctioned by the people. The God of Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* is only partly his particular construction. It is primarily a rethinking of the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition in light of Aristotelian metaphysics — a God whom Aquinas had found already operating within his socio-cultural environment, who had become an integral part of his thinking without his ever becoming aware of the fact. It was a theological idea transformed into a belief and thus lived as part of reality.

It is enough to examine the role language plays in the formation of individual personality to realize the enormous formative power of culture. In primary socialization the family educates the child to handle words and to use them according to certain syntactical rules. At first glance, the operation appears perfectly straight-forward. After all, the family does no more than transmit to the child a technique for communicating with others. But language is a fragment of culture, which contains a particular interpretation of reality. It is not a neutral instrument, but one containing a philosophy and even a morality. Thus linguistic socialization already cages an individual within a vision of the world from which he will never completely emerge. This is what led Ortega to write that "with language people penetrate us, and remain there, making each of us a member of society. The mother tongue socializes the most intimate part of our being, and thanks to it each individual belongs, in the strongest sense of the term, to a social aggregate. He may flee the society in which he was born and educated. In this flight, however, society will inexorably accompany him, because he carries it within himself."[42]

In light of this, only non-individualistic sociological theories make it possible to provide a new meaning to the famous Aristotelian definition of man as a social animal: man is a social animal not only and primarily because he lives from birth in permanent "commerce" with others; he is a social animal also, and above all, because *society lives within him as*

42. Jose Ortega y Gasset, *L'Uomo e la Gente* (Milano: Giuffre, 1978), p. 210.

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internalized culture transformed into a second nature. This is why it can be claimed that man, in addition to being a biological and psychological animal, is also a *cultural entity*. To the extent that every culture is an historical tradition, it can also be claimed that man is an *historical entity*. History, i.e., the cultural tradition as it has developed over the centuries, runs through him as the blood runs through his veins.

Thus it is hard to see how it is possible to provide an interpretive explanation of human behavior while overlooking the process of socialization, thanks to which culture becomes internalized and embedded in individual consciousness. To reiterate, in interpretive sociology there is no room for a theory of socialization. All the emphasis is placed on the transparency of structures endowed with meaning — a transparency conceivable only within a context in which genuine action is only rational action directed toward an end, the purest example of which can be found in the economic market.

The inadequacy of such a view of action must have been seen by Weber, since he acknowledged that "actual action goes on in a state of inarticulate half-consciousness or acrual unconsciousness of its subjective meaning."[43] This is no small admission, which brings Weber very close to Marx. The difference is that while in Marx the theory of "false consciousness" is closely tied to the idea that individuals, to the extent they are prisoners of the dominant ideology, are "thought" by society, in Weber there is nothing to explain the non-transparency of intended meanings. In order to make sense out of the half-unconscious character of social action, Weber would have had to abandon his rigorously nominalistic standpoint and accept the idea that culture is a kind of "collective unconscious." His obsession with saving at all costs individual freedom, the rationality of choice and the transparency of motives prevented him from taking such a step. This is a step which, while sharing Weber's moral concerns, Popper succeeded in taking, even if he was not fully aware of its implications.

What is the celebrated World 3 theory if not an explicit recognition that alongside the world of physical facts and the world of psychic facts there is also a world of cultural facts? This is a world which, although originally the product of human creativity, "*is autonomous* in what we may call its ontological status."[44] It is a world which can grow or be modified, but which, in turn, also acts on people. Popper is explicit on this crucial point.

43. Weber, *Economy and Society*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

44. Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 217.

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"World 3 is largely autonomous, even though created by us." And he adds: "There is also an important feed-back effect of our conceptions on ourselves; of World 3 on World 2." [45]

What Popper calls World 3 exhibits ontological characteristics similar to the non-individualistic sociologists' world of culture. The latter, it should be emphasized, are not necessarily all holists. As Franco Leonardi has pointed out, within the debate concerning sociological method it should always be kept in mind that there is a plurality of non-individualistic positions"[46] — first and foremost, despite the previously mentioned limitations, Parson's theory, which cannot be accused of holism. Popper's followers' critiques of holism are undoubtedly well-founded,[47] but they do not affect those sociological theories which reject the absolute primacy of the whole over the parts without overlooking the fact that, as Durkheim has indicated, for every individual *mores* constitute a world no less objective than the physical one. Durkheim's mistake lies in having almost completely dissolved the individual in the social — something which, at best, makes sense with reference to primitive society where cultural homogeneity and social control are such that elective action is minimal. But in highly differentiated societies, especially modern market societies, there are a plurality of conflicting cultural universes. Individuals are subjected to non-uniform socializing pressures and cannot be programmed in a one-dimensional manner, no matter what the Frankfurt School prophets may have written. Boudon is right when he states that "by refusing to grant social actors the faculty of choice, creation and innovations, sociologists fall into sociology's permanent temptation: sociologism."[48] Thus he calls for a new paradigm, differing from both the rational *homo oeconomicus* and the "manipulated man" of holistic sociology. It is difficult to see, however, how this can be done by beginning with Weber's sociology, predicated as it is on the centrality of *homo oeconomicus*.

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45. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
46. Franco Leonardi, *Di che cosa parla il sociologo?* (Milano: Angeli, 1986), p. 58.
47. Dario Antiseri, "Il Compito delle Scienze Sociali Teoriche," in *Mondoperaio*, 1988, p. 12.
48. Raymond Boudon, *Effets Pervers et Ordre Social* (Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1979), p. 187.

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Reviews:

The "Konservative Revolution" — Then and Now

Stefan Breuer, *Anatomie der Konservativen Revolution* (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993, 2d ed., 1995), 232 pp.

Friedbert Pflüger, *Deutschland driftet. Die Konservative Revolution entdeckt ihre Kinder* (Düsseldorf/Vienna/New York/Moscow, ECON, 1994), 198 pp.

The German Right is usually associated with the SA, the SS and the Nazis or, today, with neo-Nazi firebombing and drunken skinheads beating up foreigners. This, however, is not the whole picture. There has also been an "Intellectual Right."[1] Most notorious was a group of Weimar intellectuals constituting a movement identified, despite the heterogeneity of its members, as the "*Konservative Revolution.*" This movement may be undergoing a renaissance, although it should be distinguished from rightist mobs and far right political parties such as the *Republikaner.*[2] Today's new right intellectuals often point to the *Konservative Revolution* during the Weimar Republic as their legacy, and thinkers such as Carl Schmitt are in vogue once again.

Stefan Breuer's book on the *Konservative Revolution* deals with this paradigmatic phenomenon.[3] The book breaks the monopoly of work in this field, i.e., Armin Mohler's classic study. A re-evaluation of the *Konservative Revolution* has

1. For an overview of some "new German conservative intellectuals," see *Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte*, No. 9 (1994), with profiles of Ernst Nolte, Arnulf Baring, Botho Strauß, and the CDU party-whip in the *Bundestag,* Wolfgang Schäuble. See also issue 8 (1991), for profiles of Armin Mohler and Günter Maschke.

2. After some success in state and European elections, the *Republikaner* are now in decline after failing, in the last federal elections, to gain the 5% needed for the *Bundestag.*

3. A sociologist at the University of Hamburg and an expert in the history of modern political ideas, Stefan Breuer has also published the following books: *Max Webers Herrschaftssoziologie* (Frankfurt/New York, Campus, 1991); *Bürokratie und Charisma: Zur politischen Soziologie Max Webers* (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994); Stefan Breuer/Hubert Treiber, eds., *Zur Rechtssoziologie Max Webers: Interpretation, Kritik, Weiterentwicklung* (Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984).

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been long overdue because Mohler's book is partly an apology for that movement.[4] His goal was to defend the conservative intelligentsia in Weimar Germany against generalizations and simplifications.[5] A second opinion is even more desirable, since Mohler has not remained a detached observer but has come to see himself as the heir of the "conservative revolutionaries" and as the *mentor* of a new generation of right-wing German intellectuals.

Breuer divides his study into four main chapters. After a brief introduction, he describes the sociological, political, historical and personal background of the main characters of the *Konservative Revolution* ("*Anamnese*"). In the second and longest chapter ("*Analyse*"), he discusses their core ideas and differences in attitude. The third chapter ("*Affinitäten*") is dedicated to the relations of the various members to other political forces. In the last chapter ("*Von der Konservativen Revolution zum Neuen Nationalismus*"), he tries to provide a more adequate definition of the *Konservative Revolution*.

Breuer begins with Mohler's work. In fact, Mohler himself coined the term "*Konservative Revolution*" to characterize a right position between German Nationalists (*Deutschnationale*)[6] and National Socialists (1). Breuer raises a fundamental objection against the use of the term "conservative." Citing Kondylis, he points out that "conservatism" is linked to a concrete epoch and that the history of conservatism ended in the 19th century.[7] For Breuer, the *Konservative Revolution* is a phenomenon *sui generis* — a modern voluntarist attempt to oppose liberalism (4-5). Acknowledging the academic nature of his study, he inquires as to whether there was a core of ideas among the "conservative revolutionaries" that warrants attributing to them a distinct identity. He sees the inner circle of the authors of the *Konservative Revolution* consisting of Oswald Spengler, Moeller van den Bruck, Wilhelm Stapel, Hans Freyer, Carl Schmitt, Edgar Julius Jung, Ernst Jünger, Ernst Niekisch and Hans Zehrer. More broadly, he also includes

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4. Originally written in 1949 as a dissertation directed by Hermann Schmalenbach and Karl Jaspers, Mohler's work on the authors associated with the *Konservative Revolution* has become the standard text. See Armin Mohler, *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932: Ein Handbuch,* 3d ed. (Darmstadt, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989). For other works on "conservatism in Weimar," see Klemens von Klemperer, *Germany's New Conservatism: Its History and Dilemma in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); and Kurt Sontheimer, *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik: Die politischen Ideen des deutschen Nationalismus zwischen 1918 und 1933* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlunf, 1962).

5. *Ibid.*, p. XXV ("Vorwort zur Neuauflage"). See also Kurt Lenk, *Rechts wo die Mitte ist: Studien zur Ideologie: Rechtsextremismus, Nationalsozialismus, Konservatismus* (Baden-Baden, Nomos, 1994), p. 141. According to Lenk, Mohler sought to present National Socialism as an "illegitimate heir" of the *Konservative Revolution.*

6. The "Deutschnationale Volkspartei" — DNVP (the German Nationalist People's Party).

7. Panajotis Kondylis, *Konservatismus: Geschichtlicher Gehalt und Untergang* (Stuttgart, Klett-Kotta, 1986).

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Max Hilbert Boehm, Martin Spahn, Leopold Ziegler, Friedrich Georg Jünger and some editors of the magazines *Ring, TAT* and *Deutsches Volkstum.* Breuer explicitly leaves out Othmar Spann as belonging to a specific Austrian context, and Martin Heidegger, who became relevant only after 1933 (6-7).

Describing the context of the *Konservative Revolution*, Breuer challenges the widely held view that Germany's development during the Wilhelmian Empire and the Weimar Republic was different from that of other Western societies such as England or France. Again following Kondylis, he rejects the theory of the German *Sonderweg* used to explain the failure of the Weimar democracy and Germany's degeneration into autocracy.[8] According to Breuer, already before WWI Germany had become a bourgeois society no longer ruled by premodern élites. It had already gone through an industrial revolution which had led to a common market and a common transportation, currency, and legal system. There were legal protections for freedom and property, and although the opposition was suppressed, there was a parliament with budgetary power, and general parliamentary accountability of the government was likely to be achieved in the near future. The difference between Germany and its Western neighbors was only that the latter were in a better position to cushion the detrimental effects of modernization ("reflective modernization") and adapt them to mass democracy (15) because in Germany "simple modernization," i. e. the creation of a market economy with all its implications, happened only after "reflective modernization" was already under way (17).

Even if one agrees with Breuer that an industrial and thus bourgeois revolution had already taken place in Germany, it is questionable whether this warrants rejecting the *Sonderweg* theory. The point is not that premodern élites were hampering industrial development but, rather, that Germans did not enjoy the same political freedom as their Western neighbors, thus retaining a basically authoritarian (*obrigkeitsstaatlich*) mentality. The influence of the old élites had become eroded in the economic sphere, but remained strong elsewhere — especially in regions less affected by industrialization. To emphasize the economic side, as Breuer does, neglects the particularity of German conditions.

Breuer sees the German bourgeoisie at the turn of the century as very heterogeneous — a condition enhanced by the existence of a special caste, the *Bildungsbürgertum.* Despite its cultural influence, this intellectual class had weak roots in society and, with the coming of industrialization, felt that its world was falling apart (18-20). All the authors associated with the *Konservative Revolution* belonged to the tiny intellectual élite (little more than 1%) that had graduated from

8. Pflüger (107) points out that Kondylis thinks of the *Sonderweg* thesis as a weapon used by Leftists and from abroad to keep Germany in the Western camp. He also mentions that Kondylis has become one of the favorite writers of the New German Right, publishing frequently in its main mouthpiece, *Junge Freiheit.* Hans-Ulrich Wehler emphasizes that all New Right authors reject the thesis of the German *Sonderweg.* See Wehler, *Angst vor der Macht?: Die Machtlust der Neuen Rechten* (Bonn, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 1995), p. 14.

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the gymnasium (*Abitur*), thus qualifying for university studies. Many of them eventually graduated from universities heavily influenced by the *Bildungsbürgertum* philosophy (28-30). Breuer stresses that many of the "conservative revolutionaries," often considered nihilists, regarded religion a relevant force (28).[9] What defined a common mentality, though not an ideology, was that most of the members of this group had fought in WWI. Afraid of losing its dominant position, the *Bildungsbürgertum* had placed all its trust and hope in the younger generation, or, as Breuer puts it: "Hardly ever has a youth been so much laden with charisma and encouraged to charismatic creativity as the outgoing Wilhelmian one" (34-35) Breuer does not think that losing the war dampened this feeling but, rather, enhanced it. He also believes that most "conservative revolutionaries," though acquainted with it, did not share Spengler's forebodings about the end of Western culture. Their idealistic activism was rather an indication of their willingness to continue the charismatic activism of the *Bildungsbürgertum,* to make the 1914 apocalypse permanent (35-38). Breuer notes that the *Konservative Revolution* was not a general attack on the Christian worldview because even the more secular representatives embraced apocalyptic elements and the Jewish-Christian tradition (39). Whether this is an argument against the opposite thesis becomes questionable when one considers the "pagan way," without reference to God or the *Bible*, most authors used Christian patterns to create new myths.

In addition to this apocalyptic and mythologic-charismatic disposition, the "conservative revolutionaries" were influenced in two other ways by the war experience. One was the glorification of violence, the other the emphasis on manliness, "male sociality."[10] For Breuer, *Angst* as affirmation is also part of the group's mentality, not as a nihilistic trait but as the inability for A*ngst* (45-46). These common traits, however, were not just symptomatic for the "conservative revolutionaries." The entire Right had internalized the war (47).

In the second chapter, Breuer focuses on the unifying characteristics of the *Konservative Revolution* and what separated it from the rest of the Right —

9. Breuer also does not follow Mohler, who claims that Carl Schmitt, because of his Catholic background, did not belong to the *Konservative Revolution*. See Armin Mohler, "Carl Schmitt und die 'Konservative Revolution': Unsystematische Beobachtungen," in Helmut Quaritsch, ed., *Complexio Oppositorum: Über Carl Schmitt* (Berlin, Duncker & Humblot, 1988), pp. 129-151. As to whether Schmitt belonged to the Konservative Revolution, see Joseph W. Bendersky, "Cartl Schmitt and the Conservative Revolution," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), p. 27. Bendersky argues convincingly that Schmitt should not be counted among the "conservative revolutionaries, assuming one accepts his notion of the *Konservative Revolution*. However, he does not question the term, nor does he provide a very clear definition of it.

10. Despite this, Breuer rejects an almost exclusive and thus pseudo-psychological interpretation of the notion of male bonding as, e. g., Sombart has used it to explain Schmitt's thinking. See Nicolaus Sombart, *Die deutschen Männer und ihre Feinde: Carl Schmitt — Ein deutsches Schicksal zwischen Männerbund und Matriarchatsmythos* (München/Wien, Hanser, 1991).

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especially the National Socialists. In the group's perception, the labor movement was certainly in the enemy camp (50). Yet the main enemy was liberalism — a tendency best exemplified by Schmitt (51-52). Breuer explains why liberalism and everything related to it, including Social Democracy, was the enemy. For the "conservative revolutionaries," the liberal state in the Weimar Republic was a product of the Versailles Peace Treaty: the so-called *Versailler Diktat.* It was an element alien to the German body. If Germany wanted to become a world power once again, it had to overcome its "domestic England," i.e., liberalism. Bourgeois liberalism meant to have the enemy within the country. Thus the *Konservative Revolution*'s domestic and external enemy was one and the same (54-58).

While all the members of the group opposed political liberalism, such was not the case with economic liberalism, i.e., capitalism. While the majority were for private initiative and the deregulation of the economy, some favored a state socialism, or at least strong state regulation of the economy (63-68). The same can be said about science and technology. While Niekisch talked about a "man-eating technology" (73), those who supported private initiative also tended to advocate technological progress (76). As for reservation concerning modernization — something very widespread at the time — it was mainly against that "reflective modernization" that was destroying the social and cultural fabric (78).

There were major differences even in areas where one might expect most agreement within the group, i.e. regarding the nation and the people. Naturally, there were not many "conservative revolutionaries" who had a rationalist understanding of nationhood and people in the Anglo-American way (the nation or people as the sum of all citizens). One group had a more subjective understanding. For them, what constituted a nation was a "feeling of belonging" to a certain community. Others tended toward more "objective" criteria, such as language, culture, race, or character (81). But even within these two groups there were differences. When Schmitt, Zehrer and Jünger all based the nation on myth, Jünger saw this myth in purely voluntaristic terms, while, e.g., Schmitt presupposed a coherent ethnic or cultural, though not yet political, association of people (81-83). While Schmitt was open to all kinds of features that might constitute homogeneity, Moeller van den Bruck saw the nation as something more specific. Although it could change over time, it was not the *object* of history but its *subject.* Stapel had a similar view of the people as a "community by birth" (85).

Even more important should be the authors' views on race, since this was the main criterion by which National Socialists defined people. Here too, however, the group was very heterogeneous. Spengler opposed racism and polemicized against it (88-89), while Zehrer and Schmitt did not emphasize race, though the latter later deployed racist arguments in the futile effort to ingratiate himself with the SS.[11]

11. This happened when Schmitt had already compromised himself for careerist reasons. See my "The Alleged Unaccountability of the Academic: A Biographical Sketch of Carl Schmitt," in *Cardozo Law Review*, Vol. 16 (1995), pp. 1586-95.

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Others, such as Jünger and Stapel, did not think in biological terms, but their cultural anti-Semitism ("the civilization Jew" as the "son of liberalism") led at least Stapel to pose the alternative "Jews or Germans" and to support some type of "apartheid" solution. Freyer's and Moeller's positions were strongly influenced by Chamberlain's theories and thus almost indistinguishable from those of the National Socialists (91). Niekisch even developed his own racist theory, explaining the substance of Germanity as bisexual: servile and receiving toward the West, masculine and commanding toward the East (93), which explains his anti-Western and pro-Slavic outlook. Breuer concludes that the *Konservative Revolution* as a whole was more racist than even its opponents had assumed (93). He adds, however, that for most of the "conservative revolutionaries" this was not crucial. Their absolute preference for the nation, the state, and the people over the individual retained an element that appealed to the individual will. For Breuer, this is essential in determining the differences between the *Konservative Revolution* and National Socialism (95).

Here one is tempted to challenge Breuer's evaluation. Are the extreme positions of some authors on racism really so different from National Socialist ones, or is Breuer emphasizing slight nuances in order to be able to subsume the whole group still under one category (*Konservative Revolution*) and distinguish them from National Socialist ideologists? Was National Socialism already that coherent during the Weimar Republic? It might be argued that the racist ideology was determined only by the fact that Hitler came to power and that Rosenberg's and the SS' policies finally prevailed. That many "conservative revolutionaries" later adapted their positions on race to the Nazi way of thinking may be a sign that their views were not very far from those of the National Socialists. Does a preference for apartheid "solutions" really indicate major ideological differences with people who were already advocating a "final solution?" This may be too theoretical a way to deal with the issue. It overemphasizes the authors' theoretical explanations for their racism. Racism, however, is a phenomenon rooted in psychological conditions which do not disappear when someone explains it "rationally."

Breuer shows that most members of the *Konservative Revolution* sought a personal, charismatic form of government. Despite a certain "personality cult," however, they did not want a merely personal dictatorship (96-97). Even though there were corporative elements in some of their writings, no one really thought that unity could be built through the professions. Thus the *Konservative Revolution* as a whole did not want to diminish the state but expand it (103). While they wanted an authoritarian order *in* Germany, the "conservative revolutionaries" also had a hierarchical international order in mind, with Germany at the top (104). One group had only limited territorial ambitions, such as a Greater Germany including Austria, and a new order for Europe to create a "Great Space" (*Großraum*) for Germany (105). Others were thinking of a turn toward the East, of an *Imperium Teutonicum,* an *Impericum Germanicum* or an *Imperium Mundi* — an idea

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captured by the title of Moeller van den Bruck's *Das Dritte Reich* (106- 111).

Breuer discusses the relation between the *Konservative Revolution* and leading political forces in the chapter on "*Affinitäten.*" As a party on the Right, the German Nationalist People's Party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) was certainly a natural ally, particularly since this party had developed from representing merely agrarian interests to a relative pluralism. With Hugenberg as its chairman, the party became a "party of conviction" (*Gesinnungspartei*) whose expansionist, *völkisch- demagogic* and anti-Semitic rhetoric made its differences with the Nazi Party hard to find (116-117). The *Konservative Revolution*'s position toward the party was ambiguous, probably because of Hugenberg, who was regarded as a staunch nationalist (119). Though it excluded all Jews as early as 1924, the *Stahlhelm* (The Association of Front Soldiers) was regarded as too legalistic. Ernst Jünger attacked it in the *Standarte* — a supplement to the association's organ. When he went so far as to justify political murders, however, the magazine was banned and the leadership dropped the supplement (122-124).

Italian fascism found much resonance among the "conservative revolutionaries," though Breuer finds they did not know all that much about it (126). Nor was there any general agreement concerning how to assess this political phenomenon. For some, fascism was the first middle class revolutionary experiment (128). For others, such as Spengler, Prussian-style statism was an attractive feature (130). Reluctant at first, Schmitt later praised fascism. Breuer suggests that his eventual willingness to cooperate with the Nazis might have been due to his hope to transform National Socialism along the lines of Italian fascism (131-132). On the opposite side, Niekisch regarded fascism as an emergency measure to save bourgeois-liberal society. Part of his aversion, however, stemmed from his anti-Romanic mania that made him denounce fascism as "Catholic through and through" (134).

What was the *Konservative Revolution*'s view of National Socialism? Again Breuer finds two groups, opponents of National Socialism, and those who, despite differences, thought cooperation possible (136). Here the picture is not always clear. Thus Ernst Jünger refused a seat in the *Reichstag* for the NSDAP (mainly because he despised the masses), but also praised National Socialism as the most dangerous weapon of the national will and wished it would succeed (137-138). While far away from the Nazis ideologically because of his Christian beliefs, Jung became an advocate of a coalition with Hitler (140-41). Stapel saw the Nazi movement as a "breakthrough force" and pleaded for a coalition of the NSDAP and the Catholic Center Party (142). Zehrer, the editor of the *TAT,* had reservations about National Socialism, but tried to use the NSDAP after it came to power. He distinguished between the Nazi Party and the Nazi movement, regarding the former as an expression of that liberalism which had to be overcome. He tried to split the party by drawing wedges between the leadership and the left wing. Breuer sees this as an attempt to "de-Hitlerize" National Socialism (143-145).

There were also what Breuer calls "oscillations" toward the Left. The rea-

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son was not that, with the exception of Niekisch, the "conservative revolutionaries," liked Russia or its new Soviet regime, since they were basically as russophobe as German society as a whole (146). Rather, some of them felt one could not fight against the West and against liberalism on one hand, and accept the Western economic model on the other (147). Thus *TAT* saw two revolutionary movements in Germany, one national and the other social — the former spearheaded by the NSDAP, the latter by the Communist Party. Its editor, Zehrer, believed that those movements would join at some point. Yet after the NSDAP became stronger, he too regarded the Communists as an enemy and directed his attention to replace them by another social column, the trade unions, who had to be wrested from the Social Democrats (147-149). Niekisch has often been called a "national bolshevik" — a characterization Breuer does not consider entirely warranted. Despite pursuing a somewhat Bolshevik strategy, Niekisch did not share the same substantive program as the Communists, such as the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leading role of the Communist Party. His position was even different from that of the social revolutionary nationalist "Paetel group" that at least advocated a fighting association with the Communist Party (150- 153). For the Jünger brothers, finally, socialism was one of the basic elements of their military-style nationalism (153-154).

The attitude of the "conservative revolutionaries" toward the three presidential governments of the chancellors Brüning, Papen and Schleicher was also very heterogeneous. For some, those administrations were too closely connected with the liberal parliamentary system. Others tried to use these governments for their purposes. Thus Schmitt and Jung wanted a presidential regime through the deployment of Art. 48 of the Weimar constitution, which provided emergency powers to the Reich president (156-158). Jung became a strong ally of Papen and supported the coup against the Prussian state government, as did Schmitt, who seemed to have been the coup's *mentor rex.* Schmitt was also very close to Papen's successor, Schleicher (160-162). The *TAT,* which disliked Papen because it saw his government as a protector of particular capitalist interests, supported Schleicher, who seemed to look for a broader social basis (164-166).

According to Breuer, Hitler's seizure of power in 1933 caused a major restructuring of alliances. Some former allies of the Nazis became opponents (Jung, Zehrer), while some opponents became allies (Schmitt, Niekisch). Jung, who wrote all speeches for Hitler's coalition partner, Papen, tried to push Papen into drawing some demarcations between him and the Nazis, and to prevent Nazi hegemony. During the 1934 Röhm putsch, when Hitler ordered the liquidation of leading SA members, Jung was also murdered. Papen, however, did not dissociate himself from Hitler (167-168). Zehrer sought to contain the Nazis because he saw them opposing the German state tradition. Instead of permanent politicization, he wanted a neutralization of the people. He finally had to resign as the editor of *TAT* (169-179). Freyer associated himself with the Nazis and was

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promoted, only to be attacked by the SS when he finally called for moderation. In 1937, however, he became a Visiting Professor in Budapest which, as Breuer indicates, at that time was not exactly an "internal emigration" (169-171). Stapel and Schmitt followed similar paths. Stapel also supported the regime, including book-burning and the persecution of Jews. His magazine *Deutsches Volkstum*, however, was eventually shut down because he tried to keep it free from party influence (171-172). Schmitt had not been a Nazi supporter, but when he joined the NSDAP after the Enabling Act he rapidly adopted National Socialist views. For Breuer, Schmitt's engagement in National Socialism lasted until 1942, when he eventually realized that the war was lost (172-174). Originally an opponent of the Nazis, Niekisch quickly changed into a supporter. Still, he was arrested in 1937 by the Gestapo, convicted by the People's Court in 1939 and sent to a concentration camp until the end of the war (174-175). Spengler was a life-long opponent of National Socialism and despised its leaders and its "nihilistic socialism" (175-176). The Jünger brothers went into opposition and in 1939 Ernst Jünger published a resistance novel, *Auf den Marmorklippen* (177-178).

In his last chapter, Breuer concludes that the *Konservative Revolution* is an untenable concept, which should be discarded because the "movement" was neither "conservative" nor sufficiently uniform to define the group and distinguish it from other political formations. What was common to all its members, opposition to liberalism, was something also shared by other groups (180-181). Breuer argues that so far the debate has been too Germanic and too closely linked to the theory of the German *Sonderweg*. He proposes another concept to allow a comparison of the German movement with similar ones in other countries: the "New Nationalism" (182). Following Breuilly's three criteria defining nationalism (the existence of a distinct and unique nation; the predominance of national interests over all others; and the highest degree of national autonomy),[12] Breuer finds that Spengler's theory of a "New Imperium," Jünger's praise of the "Worker" as a symbol of the rise of a new revolutionary mankind, and Niekisch's theory are not exactly nationalist. Moeller can only be called a nationalist in a very limited sense, while only Schmitt and Jünger show clear nationalist traits — at least in their earlier writings. Zehrer and Stapel opted for a nationalism under certain conditions, while Jung and Freyer are difficult to classify (183-185). Breuer, however, overlooks these conclusions when he argues that "Whether one calls the entity around which thinking focuses a "people" or a "nation" does not matter, as long as one ascribes to this entity a distinct and individual character. . . ." (186). Here, however, Breuer seems to be trying to replace the concept of "*Konservative Revolution*" with another one at least as flimsy and vague.

According to Breuer, what was new about this "nationalism" was the charismatic element. The nation became a bearer of a metaphysical mission. This

12. See John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2d. ed. (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1994).

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nationalism has to be distinguished from older forms, also because of its emphasis on the nation's "holism." While pre-WWI nationalism had always been linked to a strategy of repression, the new nationalism was not tied to any particular class interests. It was inclusive and revolutionary (187-188). It did not seek to strengthen the existing legal order. Rather, very untypical for the German Right, it sought to destroy it (188-190). Breuer readily concedes that these characteristics may also be found in National Socialism. Yet he distinguishes the authors of the *Konservative Revolution* from Hitler by stressing that for them the nation was the supreme reference point. For Hitler, on the other hand, it was race, and he did not even see the German people as such as the supreme value. What made the German people the nucleus for a future Aryan nation in Hitler's eyes was that they were purer than other peoples (190-191). Here Breuer's argument hardly holds water in view of his own explanation for why *all* "conservative revolutionaries" should be subsumed under the term "nationalism." Does it really make that much difference whether the starting point is the *German* nation or the German *Aryan* people? The difficulty in sharply differentiating the *Konservative Revolution* from National Socialism is acknowledged by Breuer when he points out some strong racist traits in the views of several members of the *Konservative Revolution*. He tries to wiggle out of this dilemma by stressing that even for those people nationalism was ultimately a higher value than racism (191).

For Breuer, another essential difference between the *Konservative Revolution* and National Socialism is that for the latter the revolution could not end. As Franz Neumann has pointed out, Hitler's policy was to make the crisis and the subsequent political mobilization permanent (191-192).[13] The "New Nationalists," however, showed a strong predilection for the state — a state very different from the Nazi regime, based on "unity, organization, discipline, a structure of determined responsibilities and thus a certain accountability." As Breuer points out, this is "a very Prussian concept." Here three remarks are in order. First, unlike the *Konservative Revolution,* National Socialism had a chance to succeed. One may argue that the ideal of the Aryan *Führer* state was not feasible, and thus power could only be retained by making the revolution permanent. Therefore, the fact that Nazism developed into a permanent revolution does not explain why the Nazis had no vision of any eventual stability after winning. On the other hand, assuming that the *Konservative Revolution* was in fact a "movement," it does not follow that some of its theoreticians' ideas would not have dissolved into a similar permanent mobilization in order to avoid acknowledging that the ideal could not be achieved. Secondly, even if it were possible to locate a number of differences between the "New Nationalists" and the Nazis, it is questionable whether the "group" as a whole can be distinguished from National Socialism by the thin lines Breuer draws. In the end, Breuer remains trapped by the pre-existing notion that "the group" was a dis-

13. See Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth; the Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (Toronto/New York: Oxford University Press, 1942).

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tinctive one. Why does he stress the sometimes very fine dividing lines between *all* group members and the National Socialists? Would it not also make sense to focus on similarities? Maybe it is easier to establish the closeness of some "conservative revolutionaries" to the Nazis than to other "fellow" members of the *Konservative Revolution.* By trying to keep the former "conservative revolutionaries" together at all costs under the label "New Nationalists," Breuer plays into the hands of Mohler and other members of the New Right. Thirdly, Breuer does not provide an account of the extent to which the *Konservative Revolution* helped create the intellectual climate that facilitated Hitler's final seizure of power. Were the thinkers of the *Konservative Revolution* only "ivory tower" intellectuals or did they have some historical impact? Breuer touches on this only when he describes the relation between "conservative revolutionaries" and political forces, but he does not ask whether things could have gone in another direction without these authors.

Breuer sees the "New Nationalism" in Weimar Germany as a combination of contemporary French and Italian nationalist trends. Like Italian nationalism (but unlike the French variety), the German movement was aggressive and expansionist, while with French nationalism it shared anti-Semitism and anti-urbanism. His concluding assessment, however, is extremely problematic. He claims that German militarism, as articulated in the writings of the "conservative revolutionaries," was nothing particularly German. It did not stem from a certain authoritarian mentality (*Untertanengeist*), nor from a specific national pathological history: "Rather, it was the consequence of a certain position of Prussian Germany in the modern world . . . which was based on a highly unequal distribution of chances." According to Breuer, the rules of this system were meant to perpetuate the "development advantage" of the dominant states. This predicament encouraged states such as Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union, which did not want to wait for long-term changes, to seek a shortcut by violating the rules. "One may regard this," Breuer goes on, "as a pathological reaction. One must not forget, though, that this was not so much the pathology of a single country, but one of the world system as a whole" (200). For Breuer, this is probably the only aspect warranting the study of Weimar Germany's "New Nationalism" today (201).

Although formulated in a rather obscure manner, Breuer's point is roughly the following: the *Sonderweg* account of German militarism and authoritarianism as a result of the fact that Germany never had a real bourgeois revolution has to be dismissed. Germany's recourse to war was due to the fact that it was an underdog within the international system and tried to catch up by breaking rules basically designed to keep weak countries weak. This is actually a rephrasing of arguments the "conservative revolutionaries" deployed against the West. Why does Breuer not discuss this controversial thesis in detail? This is not the only possible criticism of Breuer's evaluation of the *Konservative Revolution*. Another, more serious, is that he stops his analysis with the Weimar Republic and does not ask about the existence of a similar movement of antiliberal, anti-Western intellectuals in contemporary

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Germany. His claim that in Germany the *Konservative Revolution* did not survive the Third Reich, despite attempts to revive the movement (201), is unsatisfactory. Analyses of past political movements should also deal with contemporary movements claiming to be the heirs of those intellectual currents. When Breuer wrote his book, the debate concerning the new "conservative revolutionaries"was already under way.[14] Does, e.g., the Carl Schmitt renaissance indicate a return of "conservative revolutionary" ideas? Breuer's only reference to the present is to the effect that the New Nationalism's heirs today can be found in Baghdad, Teheran and in the capitals of Black Africa and South East Asia: "There everything is different, but the pattern is familiar: the anti-Western rhetoric goes hand in hand with the most modern weapons technology; the xenophobic and chauvinist exaggerations; the paranoid constructions which always see satanic forces at work; the obstinate particularism which, at the same time, postulates a world-historical mission for one's culture." Remarks such as these, as well as his conclusion that the West is in danger and should acknowledge that the universalism with which it covers the world is "not just pure philanthropy, but a weapon" are lightly thrown about (201). There is no effort to explain exactly what he means. At any rate, the comparison of Bagdhad and Teheran with Weimar is very crude. Weimar Germany was a liberal democracy. The authors of the *Konservative Revolution* were free to write what they wanted, and they did it. Germany was in the center of Europe and, according to Breuer, even in the same cultural predicament. Thus, while providing a skillful analysis of the *Konservative Revolution*, Breuer fails to relate this phenomenon to today's world in general, and Germany in particular.

The vacuum left by Breuer is to some extent filled by Pflüger's book. A former chairman of the Christian Democratic Students Association (RCDS) at the end of the 1970s, Pflüger was for five years press secretary of the German Federal President, Richard von Weizsäcker. He is now a member of parliament for the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and belongs to the party's liberal wing. His book is written for a broader audience and does not include any documentation. It is primarily a plea for a pro-West liberal democracy in Germany, favoring European integration and NATO. It provides a general description of the German Republic after re-unification, while appealing to his fellow party members to remain pro-Western. It also warns against the emergence of a new nationalism within the CDU and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU). What is interesting here are Pflüger's thoughts about the New German Right.

The book is dedicated to Konrad Adenauer, the Federal Republic's first chancellor, and opens by pointing at some incidents Pflüger regards as signaling a re-emergence of German nationalism: Ernst Nolte's new efforts to relativize the Holocaust, the retreat from the goal of a United Europe and the reappearance of

14. See Hans-Gerd Jaschke, "Nationalismus und Ethnopluralismus: Zum Wiederaufleben von Ideen der 'Konservativen Revolution'," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 3-4 (January 10, 1992), pp. 3-10.

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old resentments against political parties and liberal parliamentarism.[15] As Pflüger puts it: "The *Zeitgeist* is blowing on the right again, and Germany is drifting" (12). Pflüger sees some parallels between the new *Berliner Republik*[16] and the Weimar Republic. As at that time, today a growing number of intellectuals are attempting to make nationalism acceptable to the center. He argues that in Weimar the intellectuals of the *Konservative Revolution* prepared the ground for the Nazis. Now a new *Konservative Revolution* is reappearing against the German liberal order. Once again distinguished intellectuals are providing the conceptual tools for the far Right. The ideas of this movement can be found in a number of publications such as *MUT, Criticón* and *Junge Freiheit* (14-16).[17]

Pflüger compares this development with the student protests of 1968. In his view, the student revolt too focused on the weaknesses of liberal society and offered a "utopian doctrine of salvation" meant to unburden people from the demands of freedom (18). Clearly, his goal is not a mere analysis of contemporary intellectual currents in Germany, but a political proclamation. The thesis that the ideas of 1968 were merely a proclamation of a "doctrine of salvation" is almost too simplistic to warrant further discussion. Pflüger develops the comparison between the earlier Left critique of the system and those presently developed by the New Right in other parts of the book. He argues that there once was an "adoration of Marx" — a tendency to reduce complexity out of a longing for a final, all-explaining truth (42), and sees a parallel between the Left's anti-West attitudes in the 1960s and 1970s and those of the Right today (107). By relating the reemerging Right to the 1960s student protests, he betrays a typical conservative trait never to attack Right extremists without, at the same time, also pointing at Left extremism. Maybe both Left protesters then and Right intellectuals now oppose the same liberal system by means of similar arguments. From a conservative viewpoint, however, both attacks should be regarded as equally wrong and damaging. Yet, to place Left ideas seeking emancipation and democracy alongside

15. Nolte was one of the instigators of the original *Historikerstreit* in the mid- 1980s. See *Historikerstreit* (Munich/Zurich: Piper, 1987) and the thorough analysis of the debate in Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). See also the "Special issue on the *Historikerstreit*," in *New German Critique* 44 (Spring-Summer 1988).

16. The Federal Republic of Germany used to be called *Bonner Republik.* After the decision of the German *Bundestag* to move the capital from Bonn to Berlin, some authors now speak of the *Berliner Republik.* See also the book by Pflüger's wife, Margarita Mathiopoulos, *Das Ende der Bonner Republik: Beobachtungen einer Europäerin* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt,1993). Many of Pflüger's ideas are identical with those of his wife. Many quotations are also the same. However, the scope of Mathiopoulos' book is somewhat different and includes a number of other aspects Pflüger leaves out, while Pflüger concentrates much more on the *Konservative Revolution.*

17. For an account of *Junge Freiheit*, see Marko Martin, "Stramm zur Sache," in *Die Zeit* (October 13, 1993), p. 37; Claus Leggewie, *Druck von Rechts: Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993), pp. 119-129.

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the anti-egalitatian, autocratic, or even *völkisch* ideas of the Right is intellectually dishonest. Even Pflüger, himself a post-1968er — a child of the "second" enlightenment achieved by the students' revolt (112) — may not really believe this. The association of Left and of the New Right critique serves a particular purpose.

For Pflüger, the fact that a Right magazine such as *Junge Freiheit* makes Carl Schmitt its "hero" indicates the relevance authors of the former *Konservative Revolution* have for the contemporary Right (24-25). The discernible pattern of "ridiculing democracy" is the same blue-print the "conservative revolutionaries" used against the Weimar Republic. Inspired particularly by the classic work on the dissolution of Weimar democracy by Bracher (19),[18] Pflüger demands that everyone who participates in the debate on the future of democracy remember the outcome of the *Konservative Revolution* (30). People should be careful not to jump on the popular bandwagon of parliamentarism-bashing presently unleashed by the Right.

Pflüger notes that today, as in the Weimar Republic, mysticism, anti-rationalism and the search for "what is essential" (*das Eigentliche*) are in vogue once again (37). As one of the protagonists of this tendency, he names Botho Strauß, whose article "Anschwellender Bocksgesang"[19] he sees as an indicator of the new anti-rationalism.[20] Similarly, he sees parallels between the Weimar "myth of the stab in the back"[21] and the relativization of the Holocaust (52, 78). Pflüger even claims that the contemporary "conservative revolutionaries" are worse than their ancestors because they have not learned from history (55). Without the mysticism and racism of the *völkisch*-nationalist trends in Weimar germany, Hitler would not have come to power. Chamberlain's role before the war is now allegedly played by Alain de Benoist, who advocates a "heterogeneous world of homogeneous peoples," called "ethnopluralism" (57). Pflüger claims this anti-rational tendency is supported by a number of scientists and by politicians who try to exploit xenophobia for short-term political advantages (58-65). In his view, the nation should be understood in a republican and not in a *völkisch* way. Murderers from the radical Right should have less in common

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18. Karl-Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Democratie: Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Democratie*, 2nd reprint of the 5th edition (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1984).

19. In *Der Spiegel,* No. 6 (February 8, 1993), pp. 202-207.

20. See Andreas Kilb, "Anschwellende Geistesfinsternis: Einiges über die Wiederkehr einer alten Epochenstimmung, den 'Bocksgesang' von Botho Strauß und Oswald Spenglers Hauptwerk 'Der Untergang des Abendlandes'." in *Die Zeit*, No. 14 (April 2, 1993), p. 57. Cf. also Richard Helzinger, "Die obskuren Inseln der kultivierten Gemeinschaft: Heiner Müller, Christa Wolf, Volker Braun — deutsche Zivilisationskritik und das neue Antiwestlertum," in *Die Zeit*, No. 23 (June 4, 1993), p. 8.

21. The "myth of the stab in the back" spread by anti-democratic forces after the 1918 "revolution" in Germany claimed that Germany was undefeated in the field and that only the revolutionaries on the home front were responsible for losing the war.

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with "us" than members of foreign cultures. It is essential to prevent asylum-seekers from taking of the role of the Jews in the 1920s (69-70).

Returning to the parallel between the Weimar "myth of the stab in the back" and today's "Auschwitz lie," Pflüger points out that a rewriting of history once again plays a major role in the nationalists' strategy (78). The "re-assessment" of history begun in the mid-1980s with the *Historikerstreit* might be followed now by an even further relativization of the Nazi past in relation to a re-examination of East Germany's communist past (78-82). Another element in the Right's strategy is the endeavor to create a "special, anti-West consciousness." German nationalists, but also Left intellectuals, are beginning to challenge German membership in the Western alliance (*Westbindung*),[22] including European integration and membership in NATO. The focus should no longer be Western orientation but Germany's location within the center of Europe (106). From the New Right's anti-West tendencies, Pflüger draws the line to a traditional anti-West current in the Social Democratic Party, reflected only recently in its opposition to the deployment of German troops outside the country (114-115). Here again, Pflüger's analysis betrays some political fudging or, if it is what he really believes, a simplification. By placing all criticism of Western culture on the same level as the criticism by the New Right, he tries to put a lid on any criticism of the current structure of Western liberalism, including capitalism. His fiery plea for "liberalism" thus turns into an unconditional defense of the *status quo*. He sees the new world situation following the collapse of the communist bloc as a wholesome affirmation of *the* Western system. Both liberal democracy and capitalism have won. Even though one might agree with Pflüger's evaluation of the New Right, his overall reduction of any fundamental criticism of today's predominant structures to a first step toward totalitarianism must be rejected. There may be good reasons for Germany to favor European integration and to stay in NATO.[23] But does this mean that NATO's policies, or even American policies,[24] must be accepted unconditionally? Is the envisioned NATO extension to the East not to be discussed because such discussion is considered anti-West? Insinuations of the kind, implicit in Pflüger's equation of the criticism of some aspects of Western policies with that of Right nationalists who oppose liberal democracy, seem to reflect "the end of history" mentality. It may be right, as Pflüger maintains, that for Germany, at least for the time being, there may be no realistic alternatives to the *status quo*. This, however, does not imply an "injunction

22. See Rainer Zitelmann, Karlheinz Weißmann and Michael Großheim, eds., *Westbindung: Chancen und Risiken für Deutschland* (Berlin, Frankfurt/Main, Propyläen, 1993).

23. See the argument by Wehler, *op. cit.*, p. 10, that the *Westbindung* has hitherto prevented the development of 19th and early 20th century autonomous power politics.

24. The assumption it is automatically suspect for Germany to have different interests than the US is even widespread within the Left. See Jacob Heilbrunn, "Spring Time," in *The New Republic* (October 16, 1995), pp. 21-25. See also my letter to the editor of *The New Republic* (November 6, 1995), p. 7.

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against thinking" ruling out any future reflection about possible structural changes to safeguard international peace and guarantee justice in international relations as destructive to democracy.

One can agree with Pflüger when he warns against revivals of nationalism in Germany. He is specifically against developing any "healthy nationalism" because, in his view, this is to play with fire. In the past, the boundaries between a "natural nationalism" and its "aggressive" counterpart have proven to be too flexible. The national idea usually tends to develop a "dangerous self-dynamism" (120). The concept of the nation, particularly in its ethnic version, is anti-rational and threatens freedom and peace (121). The author also points to some strategies used by neo-nationalists to popularize their cause within the bourgeoisie. One is the redefinition of the political spectrum. All of a sudden, Right extremists are being called conservatives, and people in the center become leftists. He identifies the leading German conservative newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, as one of the spearheads for maneuvers to make the new nationalism (122).[25] Another sign of the re-emerging nationalist mood in Germany is the revival of those Prussian symbols in public life that, as Pflügler points out, emphasize the militarist part of Prussian history. Anyone who questions this "Prussia revival " is denounced as a "Prussia hater" or as a "*vaterlandsloser Gesell*" (152).[26] In the last chapter, Pflüger addresses the increasing neo-nationalist currents within his party and warns his party about losing the center (181).

Although Pflüger's attempt to present neo-nationalism and the Left critique as merely two sides of the same coin is obviously driven by party politics, it is remarkable how he, as a politician from the (conservative) center, views the rise of a new nationalism in Germany that expressly traces its heritage back to the "conservative revolutionaries" of the Weimar Republic. Any time people try to recycle the theorists of the *Konservative Revolution*, it should generate suspicions. Thus, for example, there is no reason why an author such as Carl Schmitt should not be studied, since his views transcend the current system of nation states and are consequently extremely relevant. Yet there are others who try to revive Schmitt for the opposite reason: because of his emphasis on state power and his ideas, particularly his anti-liberalism and anti-parlamen-tarism, as a tool to validate old autocratic and nationalist models. In Germany, where there is a great deal of suspicion of the authors of the *Konservative Revolution* because of their role in the rise of National Socialism, the neo-nationalists have first to clear them of any

25. On the role of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as a mouthpiece for nationalist and revisionist opinions, see John Ely, "The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and Contemporary National Conservatism," in *German Politics and Society* 35, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 81-121.

26. In Germany, the term "*vaterlandsloser Gesell*" refers to "traitor of the Fatherland." It has been used by conservatives after WWI against the Social Democrats and is closely related to the "myth of the stab in the back."

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Nazi association before they can make their ideas generally acceptable. Only after people come to the conclusion that the opponents of democracy during the Weimar Republic were not responsible for the rise of Hitler will the gate be wide open for a new broad-based German nationalism. Thus the instrumentalization of Schmitt's writings in Germany is no accident.[27] It is part of an attempt to recycle the "old" vision of Germany. This implication ought to be understood by anyone who analyzes the ideas of the *Konservative Revolution*. Such knowledge should be helpful in preventing any alliance with the "wrong prophets."

Manfred H. Wiegandt

27. Concerning one example, see my review of Paul Noack, *Carl Schmitt* (Berlin/Frankfurt/Main, Propyläen, 1983), in *German Politics and Society* 35, Vol. 13, No.2 (Summer 1995), pp. 126-130.

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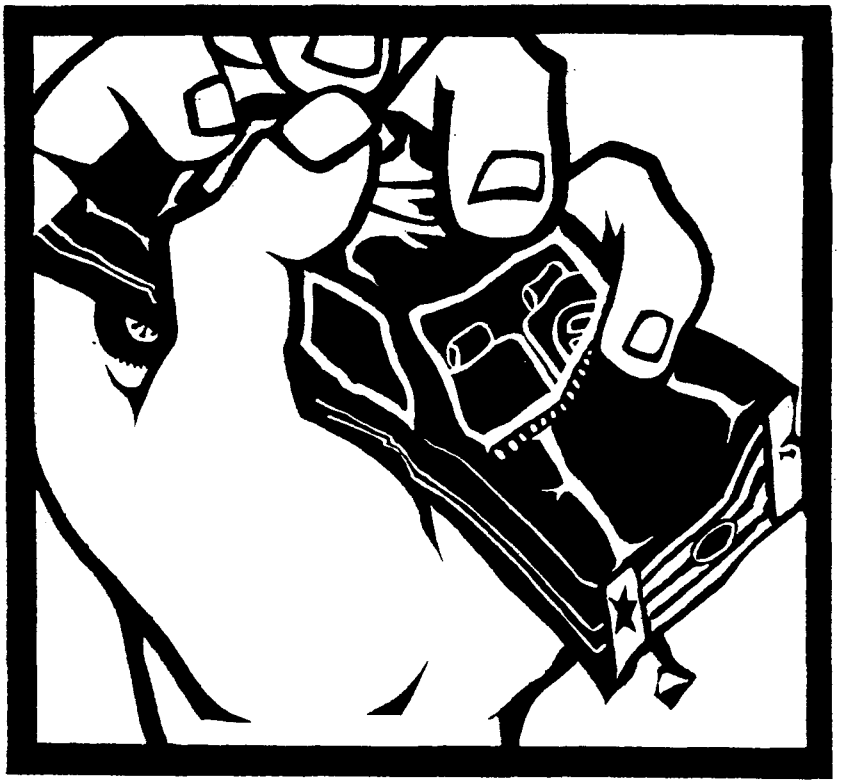

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